US releases Bin Laden 'smoking gun'

STORY BELOW, COLUMN 2

Ramadan ends; Misa de Gallo begins

BY EDWIN O. FERNANDEZ
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO City—In a rare coincidence, Christians and Muslims celebrate this weekend three important religious events almost at the same time.

After marking the World Day of Prayer and

RAMADAN/ A7

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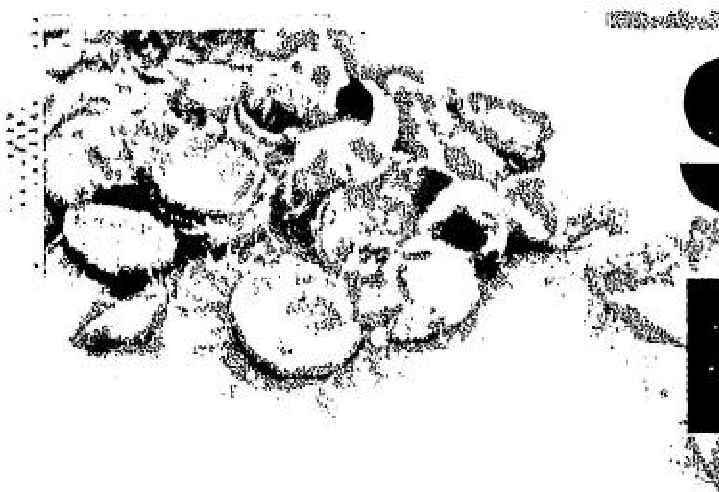
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2001 ★ 110 PAGES 10 SECTIONS VOL.17 NO. 7 ₱15

WITH THIS ISSUE
All about *élan*

- Discovering Joy
- Embracing Life
- Zobel and Zen
- An Abundance of Joy



SC rules coconut levy 'public funds'

'A victory for PCGG, a victory for farmers'

BY MICHAEL LIM UBAC AND DONNA S. CUETO

THE SUPREME Court yesterday declared that coco levy funds were "prima facie (apparently) public funds," thus upholding the right of the government, through the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG), to exercise its right to vote the sequestered shares of the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB).

With a vote of 10-5, the full court declared that the sequestered UCPB shares were "indisputably acquired with coco levy funds which are public in character." The UCPB is 94.29-percent sequestered and the remaining shares are owned by First United Bank.

The 47-page majority opinion was written by Associate Justice Artemio Panganiban.

"This is a victory for us, a victory for the coconut farmers," said PCGG Commissioner Ruben Carranza.

Carranza said that this was the first categorical ruling from the Supreme Court on the public character of the coco levy funds.

"This is more categorical than the earlier pronouncement (that the coco levy funds are imbued with public interest)," he said.

Carranza said that the PCGG was expecting the decision on the case, but it did not know that it would come out this soon.

He said this was probably the reason why businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. had been pushing for the sale of 15 percent of San Miguel Corp. to Kirin Co. Ltd. of Japan for $540 million. *(See related story)*

With the Supreme Court's rul-

SC/ A20

HOW THEY VOTED:

YES

1. Panganiban
2. Davide Jr.
3. Bellosillo
4. Vitug
5. Puno
6. Mendoza
7. Quisumbing
8. Buena
9. De Leon Jr.
10. Carpio

NO

1. Melo
2. Kapunan
3. Pardo
4. Ynares Santiago
5. Sandoval-Gutierrez

RP rice terraces in peril, says UN

HELSINKI—The United Nations added 18 new "World Heritage" sites to its prestigious list on Thursday, but at the same time stressed its concern for the conservation of already-listed sites in the Philippines and Egypt.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) World Heritage Committee put the Philippines' rice terraces and Egypt's Abu Mena on the "endangered" list, saying their preservation was under threat.

"The rice terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1995, represent a very delicate, evolving cultural landscape," the Unesco Committee said in a statement.

"In the absence of a systematic monitoring program and comprehensive management plan, it is, at present, impossible to guarantee the preservation and sustainable development of these rice terraces," the committee added.

The other site put on the "endangered" list was the ancient Christian city of Abu Mena in Egypt, which was inscribed in 1979. It is threatened by the development of the surrounding area, Unesco said.

"A land reclamation program for agricultural development has caused a dramatic rise of the water table. Excess water is posing a serious threat of collapse to numerous buildings and they have had to be closed to the public," it said.

RP RICE/ A6

STAIRWAY to heaven. The Ifugao rice terraces, declared a World Heritage site in 1995 as examples of living cultural landscapes, have been placed on the "endangered" list by the World Heritage Committee in a meeting in Helsinki on Wednesday.

Kirin entry seen to insure Danding's hold on San Miguel

BY GIL CABACUNGAN JR., DORIS C. DUMLAO, CARLITO PABLO AND DONNA S. CUETO

SAN MIGUEL Corp. chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. and Kirin Co. Ltd. of Japan have struck a shareholders' agreement firming up their alliance to wrest control of the Philippine beer giant from the Macapagal administration.

A Malacañang insider said the shareholders' pact mandated Kirin to vote as a bloc with the Cojuangco group in SMC's board.

The agreement also includes a buy-out clause which gives Cojuangco first crack in buying Kirin's shares.

President Macapagal-Arroyo welcomed the planned sale of 15 percent of SMC to Kirin as "a shot in the arm of the Philippine economy."

Ms Macapagal, however, stopped short of endorsing the deal because of its implications on the government's claim on the coconut levy funds, which constitute 27 per-

KIRIN/ A20

Soldiers tie yellow ribbons on M16s

BY JULIE ALIPALA-INOT
PDI Mindanao Bureau

ZAMBOANGA City—Soldiers engaged in the battle against the Abu Sayyaf have tied yellow ribbons on their Armalite rifles.

A soldier said the ribbons were serving as an "inspiration" because somebody was waiting for him to come home for Christmas.

Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu, chief of the Armed Forces' Southern Command, echoed this sentiment. "These are a reminder to our soldiers of the necessity to safely rescue the hostages so they can go back to their homes this Christmas," he said.

He added: "What can better suggest that than yellow ribbons tied to the slings of the soldiers' rifles?"

The Abu Sayyaf is still holding three people hostage—American missionaries Martin and Gracia Burnham and Filipino nurse Ediborah Yap.

Earlier, Cimatu said the military had imposed a deadline on itself. "We are closing in on the bandits, and we are very sure the hostages would be freed before Christmas," he said.

Cimatu said they were looking forward to Dec. 16 as the day the hostages would walk free.

He said the soldiers were now very close to the hideout of Abu Sayyaf spokesperson Abu Sabaya in the Sampinit Complex in Basilan.

SOLDIERS/ A5

Santa drives a pickup truck, say believers

SYRACUSE, New York—Everyone knows the public side of the jolly old fellow in the red suit who delivers gifts on Christmas.

But what about Santa Claus the man?

Americans revealed an interesting image of the private side of Saint Nick in a poll conducted by Zogby International.

When he's not busy being Santa

SANTA/ A6

US releases Bin Laden 'smoking gun'

WASHINGTON, DC—A videotape released by the Pentagon yesterday showed suspected terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden calmly describing part of the planning that went into the Sept. 11 strikes on the World Trade Center.

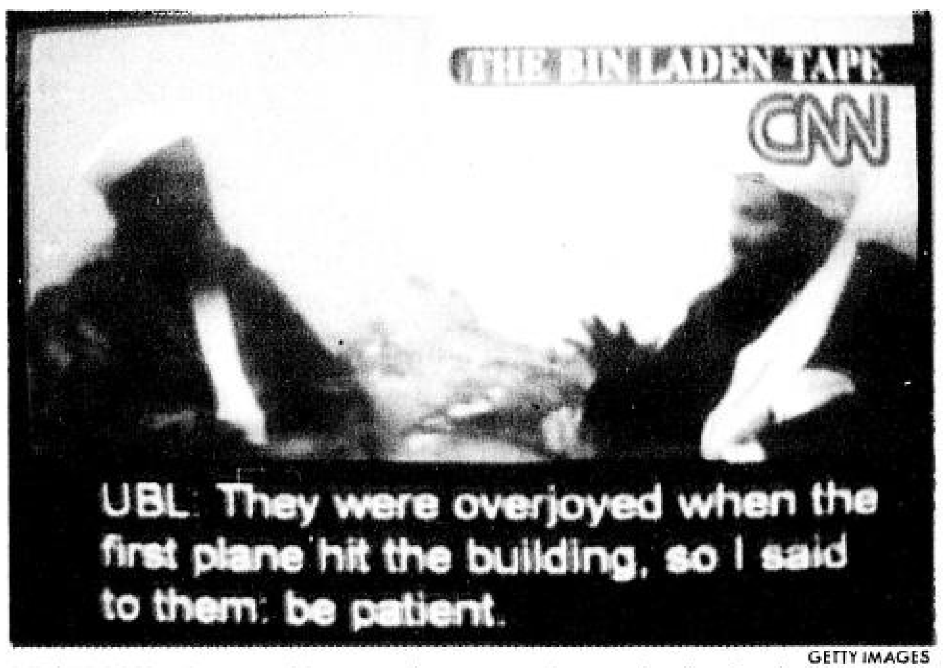
US officials said the tape proves that Bin Laden was indeed responsible for the attacks that killed nearly 3,300 people.

Bin Laden at times appeared amused as he talked about the attacks on the hour-long tape the US government said was found in Afghanistan, "We calculated in advance the number of casualties from the enemy, who would be killed based on the position of the tower," Bin Laden said in the official US translation which accompanied the tape. "We calculated that the floors that would be hit would be three or four floors. I was the most optimistic (of all the planners)."

Gesturing with his hands, he said he had figured that the burning jet fuel "would melt the iron structure of the building and collapse the area where the plane hit" and take down only the floors above it.

"This is all that we had hoped for," he said, holding one hand up vertically and striking it

US/ A7


THE BIN LADEN TAPE
CNN
UBL: They were overjoyed when the first plane hit the building, so I said to them: be patient.

GETTY IMAGES

PENTAGON releases videotape that, according to the Bush administration, proves Bin Laden ordered the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States.

GMA sends emissary to Mahathir

BY DONA Z. PAZZIBUGAN AND FE B. ZAMORA

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said she had sent her adviser on special concerns on a "back-channelling" mission to Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad regarding Nur Misuari.

"Oh, this is the back-channeling to the Prime Minister regarding Misuari," the President said at her weekly press conference, adding that her administration had finalized plans for the renegade Moro leader's deportation as well as his arrest and detention in the Philippines.

But when asked, she refused to categorically say whether Norberto Gonzales had told Mahathir the date when Misuari should be deported.

GMA/ A5

Second FRONT PAGE

SACAMAT NAMAN

Gloria backs smaller wage cut for Pinays

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said she supports a proposal to ask Hong Kong authorities to make a smaller cut in the minimum wage for foreign domestic helpers in the city.

The Hong Kong government announced recently it is slashing by 21.6 percent the salaries of the household workers due to the current economic crisis.

This met with strong protest from the foreign workers, including hundreds of thousands of Filipinos.

In her press conference yesterday, Ms Macapagal welcomed a proposal by some of the Filipino workers for a five to 10 percent wage cut instead.

"That's a very, very good input. I hope the Department of Labor and Employment and the Department of Foreign Affairs are listening," she said.

Dona Z. Pazzibugan

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Public wins round on rent control

By Rocky Nazareno

BUCKLING to public pressure, the Senate housing and resettlement committee has hammered out a final report recommending the extension of the Rent Control Law for two more years.

"This is to recognize the unusual difficulties that a great number of our people are experiencing right now," said committee chair Sen. Francis Pangilinan.

Extension of the Rent Control Law is expected to benefit some 5.5 million Filipinos, or the equivalent of 917,051 households, who rent their dwellings.

"This is an interim period in which our people should be given more breathing space," said Pangilinan of the two-year moratorium on exorbitant rent increases.

Under the Senate proposal, rent increases will be limited to no more than eight percent in the next two years for dwellings that rent for P6,500 or less per month.

This differs from the version of the bill passed by the House which provides for an increase of 10 percent in the next three years for dwellings that rent for P9,000 and below in highly urbanized areas, and P6,000 or less in the rural areas.

The Senate proposal also provides for the establishment of an exit program to "ensure cushioning of the impact on renters should the Rent Control Law finally expire."

The program will be undertaken by the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council within six months of the effectivity of the new Rent Control Law.

Plenary deliberations on the bill will start Tuesday with Pangilinan and Senators Ralph Recto and Rodolfo Biazon expected to defend it.

"The Senate was pressured to act based on a public clamor just as the President blinked on this issue," Recto said.

Recto also underscored that the extension of the Rent Control Law was "a start to our long and tedious effort to streamline and rationalize the housing sector."

Pangilinan acknowledged that the Senate will be pressed for time to pass the bill before Congress adjourns on Dec. 21.

"That's why we hope the President certifies this bill as urgent to exempt it from the three-day rule," Pangilinan said.

Under Senate rules, three days are required to print the final version of the bill before it could be signed into law.

With a certification from President Macapagal-Arroyo, the bill could be passed uninterrupted in its second and third readings and immediately forwarded to Malacañang for signing into law.

"We welcome the insertion of that provision because we feel that affordability (of rental units) should proactively respond to the question of supply," said HUDCC chair Michael T. Defensor, who was at the Senate attending the national budget hearing when he was informed of the finalization of the committee report.

Defensor said the study should concentrate on "the development of rental housing and apartments with focus on providing other incentives to investors like tax shelters."

Defensor pointed out that there is currently a backlog of 4.2 million housing units nationwide.

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Luke Roxas disowns Desierto 'bribe' tape

By Michael Lim Ubac
and Christine O. Avendaño

BUSINESSMAN Luke Roxas has disowned the taped conversation which his former lawyer, Ernesto Francisco Jr., claimed showed that he had authorized payment of a bribe to Ombudsman Aniano Desierto.

Through his new lawyers, Roxas yesterday wrote Rep. Marcelino C. Libanan, chair of the House committee on justice, saying he did not authorize Francisco to record, much less play to reporters, the audio tape in which the businessman and the lawyer talked about the alleged bribe to Desierto.

In the letter, Roxas' new lawyers, Mark Averilla and Jose Vicente Salazar, said Francisco's recording of the audio tape violated the Anti-Wiretapping Law.

"This is aggravated by the fact that this was committed by a lawyer, against his client," said the two lawyers, alluding to the confidentiality of lawyer-client communications.

Roxas had earlier executed an affidavit stating that he did not authorize Francisco to file the impeachment complaint against Desierto at the House of Representatives on his behalf.

Francisco has charged Desierto with taking a bribe in exchange for sitting on a case in 1997 involving Roxas' former bank, the Bank of Southeast Asia (BSA).

Francisco played for reporters the audio tape of his conversation with Roxas in which they discussed the money, allegedly P400,000, and beta camera accessories that they gave to Desierto.

The House committee on justice, after studying Francisco's complaint, ruled that it was sufficient in form and Desierto's impeachment could proceed.

It was then that Francisco submitted to the committee additional evidence against Desierto consisting of the audio tape and receipts signed by his aide, Fernando Timbol, for the camera accessories.

Francisco, in an earlier interview, admitted that he did not consult with Roxas prior to filing the impeachment complaint at the House in October.

Desierto has decried the evidence as being "weak and polluted," as well based on "hearsay."

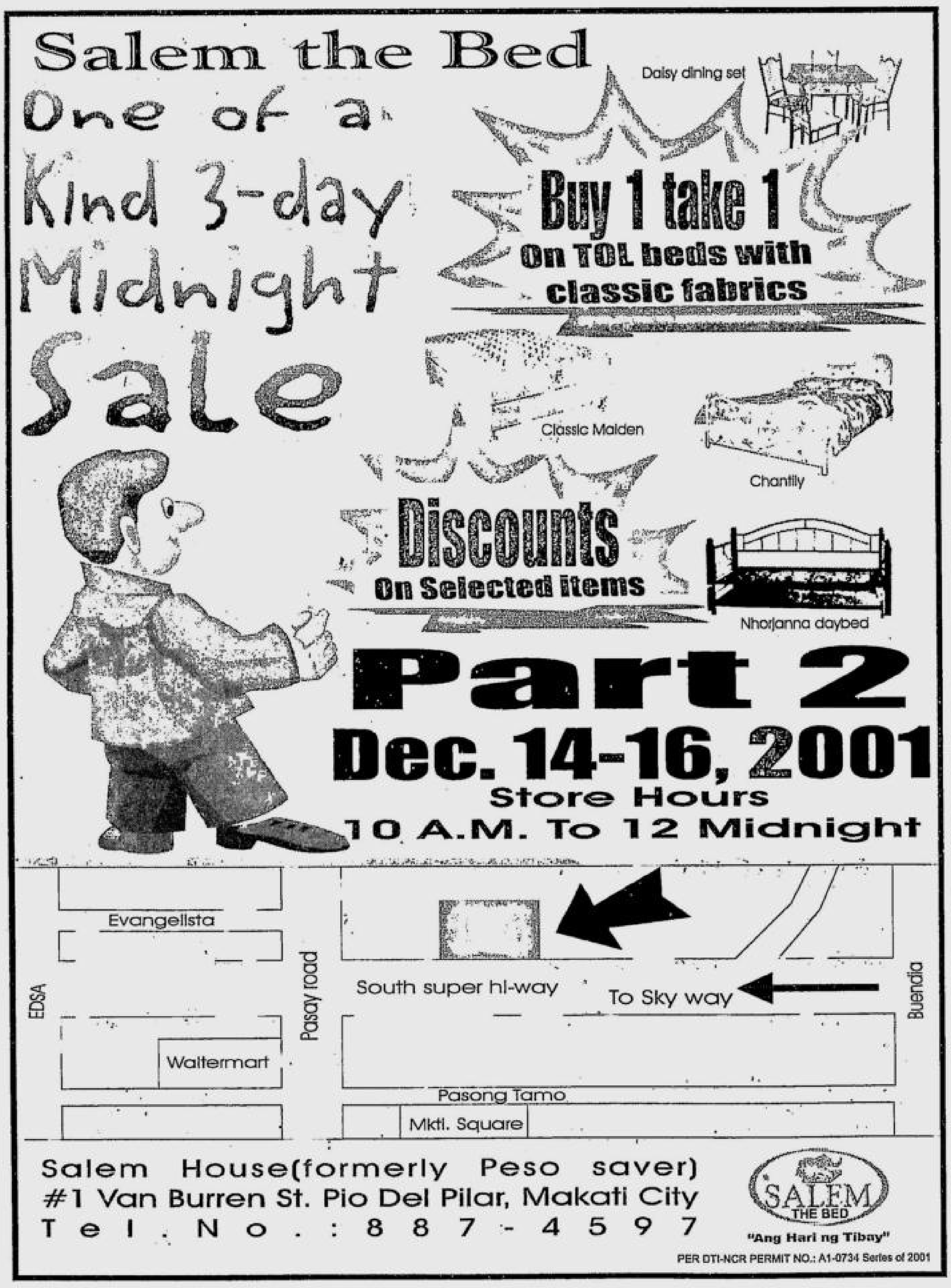
On Thursday, he said Francisco should come up with stronger evidence if he wanted the impeachment complaint to prosper.

Yesterday, Francisco countered that Desierto's response to the alleged bribery was a "stupid defense."

"He's (Desierto) making them (Roxas and Timbol) the fall guys to save himself," Francisco said, in reaction to the Ombudsman's assertion that he had nothing to do with the gift of camera accessories by Roxas to Timbol.

Desierto had claimed that Roxas gave the camera accessories to Timbol "because the cameraman had been hired by Roxas to cover special events for the latter's companies."

But Francisco said that Timbol only met Roxas twice—on Sept.10, 1997 when Roxas allegedly handed the P400,000 to Desierto and a few days later when Timbol dropped by Roxas' office to ask for camera chargers and batteries.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ANNOUNCEMENT
Due to unforseen circumstances the December 15, 2001 SIDE A GOIN' ON 17 CONCERT is rescheduled for next year (date to be announced). All tickets purchased must be refunded at Araneta Coliseum Box Office starting Dec. 20, Thursday 2 pm.
Please bear with us. Thank you.

GMA a no-show at impeachment anniversary fete

By Rocky Nazareno

ON THE first anniversary of the impeachment trial that brought down her predecessor, President Macapagal-Arroyo failed to attend a reunion of personalities involved in that historic process at the Westin Philippine Plaza hotel.

Virtually everyone involved in the trial that took place from Dec. 13, 2000 to Jan. 16, 2001 was there. And from 7 p.m. to almost 11 p.m., they waited for Ms Macapagal to show up.

"(Ms Macapagal) is not doing so bad. I'd rather have her in power than (Joseph) Estrada, otherwise we would have been plunged into more poverty and suffering by now," said the impeachment's star witness, former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

The affair was paid for by the guests themselves, with former prosecutor Arno Sanidad standing at the entrance to the hotel's Davao room soliciting donations for the evening's festivities.

Singson was said to have contributed the largest amount to the affair.

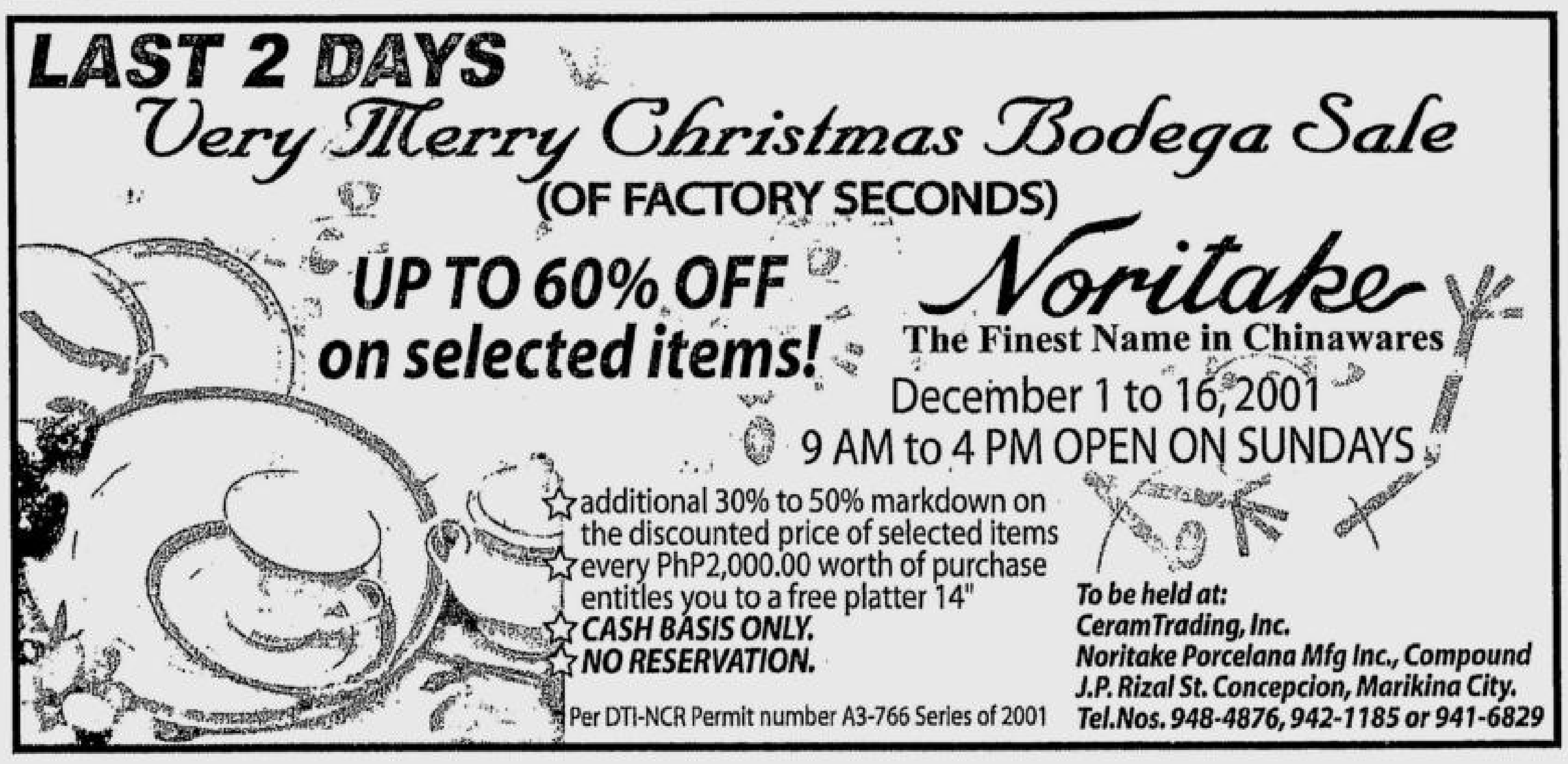
Bank executive Clarissa Ocampo, who delivered the most telling blow against Estrada when she testified that he and Jose Velarde were one and the same person, arrived with a group of bodyguards but left a few minutes later.

Lead prosecutor and now Sen. Joker Arroyo shuttled between the nearby Senate building and the five-star hotel as he juggled defense of the budgets of agencies attached to the Office of the President with attending the party.

Also present were personalities who have since assumed high positions in the Macapagal administration.

Erratum

JIMMY Yaokasin Jr., national president of the Philippine Jaycees, was inadvertently identified as Jimmy Yaokasu in the page one caption of the Ten Outstanding Policemen photo which appeared in yesterday's INQUIRER.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Estradas won't be home for holidays after all

By Volt Contreras

EX-PRESIDENT Joseph Estrada can have his eye operation tomorrow, but he will have to spend his recovery period and the rest of the holiday season in detention at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center.

In two separate rulings, the Sandiganbayan yesterday approved a cataract operation on the deposed president on Dec. 16, but rejected his and co-accused son Jinggoy's request for an 11-day Christmas furlough.

The anti-graft court's Third Division, which is hearing the plunder case against the two, denied their request to be allowed to go home for Christmas for "lack of merit."

Father and son had hoped to spend the holidays in their respective Greenhills, San Juan homes. They had asked to be released from detention from Dec. 23 to Jan. 2, 2002.

The Sandiganbayan upheld the vigorous opposition filed Thursday by state prosecutors who objected to the Estradas' motion for lack of both legal basis and historical precedent.

The elder Estrada, at least, was granted permission by the court to return to the Asian Eye Institute, a private facility at the Rockwell Center, Makati City, for cataract surgery on his left eye.

The court based its ruling on a medical report submitted by AEI's Dr. Amadeo Veloso Jr., head of Estrada's examining team.

The court approved the schedule for the ex-president's cataract surgery—7 a.m. tomorrow, at the earliest.

The report said the entire operation, including pre- and post-operative monitoring, would take four to five hours.

Veloso indicated that a post-operative evaluation will be scheduled after the surgery and "subsequent visits" of Estrada to the AEI will depend on the progress of his recovery.

The ruling was silent on the subsequent visits, however.

The ruling only allows Estrada to leave the VMMC under police escort for the AEI in the morning of Dec. 16, but wants him back in detention not later than 5 p.m. of the same day.

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Raps filed in solon's assassination

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice yesterday filed criminal charges against three members of the New People's Army in the killing of Cagayan Rep. Rodolfo "Rudy" Aguinaldo and his bodyguard last June.

Charged with double murder before the Tuguegarao City Regional Trial Court were Felix Robregado, Gerard Mendoza and Iner Bulusan.

The three were also charged with frustrated murder for wounds sustained by Amelia Soriano, who was with Aguinaldo and his bodyguard, PO2 Joey Garo, when the assassination occurred.

State prosecutors Ruben Zacarias and Melvin Abad, filed separate charges against the three "considering that respondents' acts were directed at three different persons, (and) the different crimes must be considered distinct crimes of murder and frustrated murder."

Aguinaldo and his bodyguard were killed at around 7:15 p.m. on June 12 on Magallanes Street in Tuguegarao, Cagayan. *Michael Lim Ubac*

Koizumi coming

JAPANESE Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi is coming.

President Macapagal-Arroyo said Koizumi would make a state visit to the Philippines on Jan. 9 and 10.

Ms Macapagal paid a working visit to Japan in September.

The President said she would update Koizumi on local projects being undertaken with Japan's official development assistance (Oda).

Japan is the Philippines' biggest Oda provider.

"The important thing that I want to do is continue the subject matter of our talks when I was in Tokyo," Ms Macapagal said.

"And that is to show the ever-improving utilization of our Oda, so they (Japanese government) would not regret (maintaining) our Oda even if they reduced their Oda to the world," the President said.

Dante Canlas, director of the National Economic Development Authority, said the country's Oda utilization improved three-fold from the second to the third quarter of the year.

Total disbursements from July to September totaled $62.13 million, from $23.76 million between April and June.

Canlas said, however, that only 27 projects from the 149 Oda loans available for this year have contracts that were approved by the Neda board.

The latest Oda board approval this week involved 22 contracts, eight of which are Oda-funded amounting to P1.78 billion, he said. *Dona Z. Pazzibugan*

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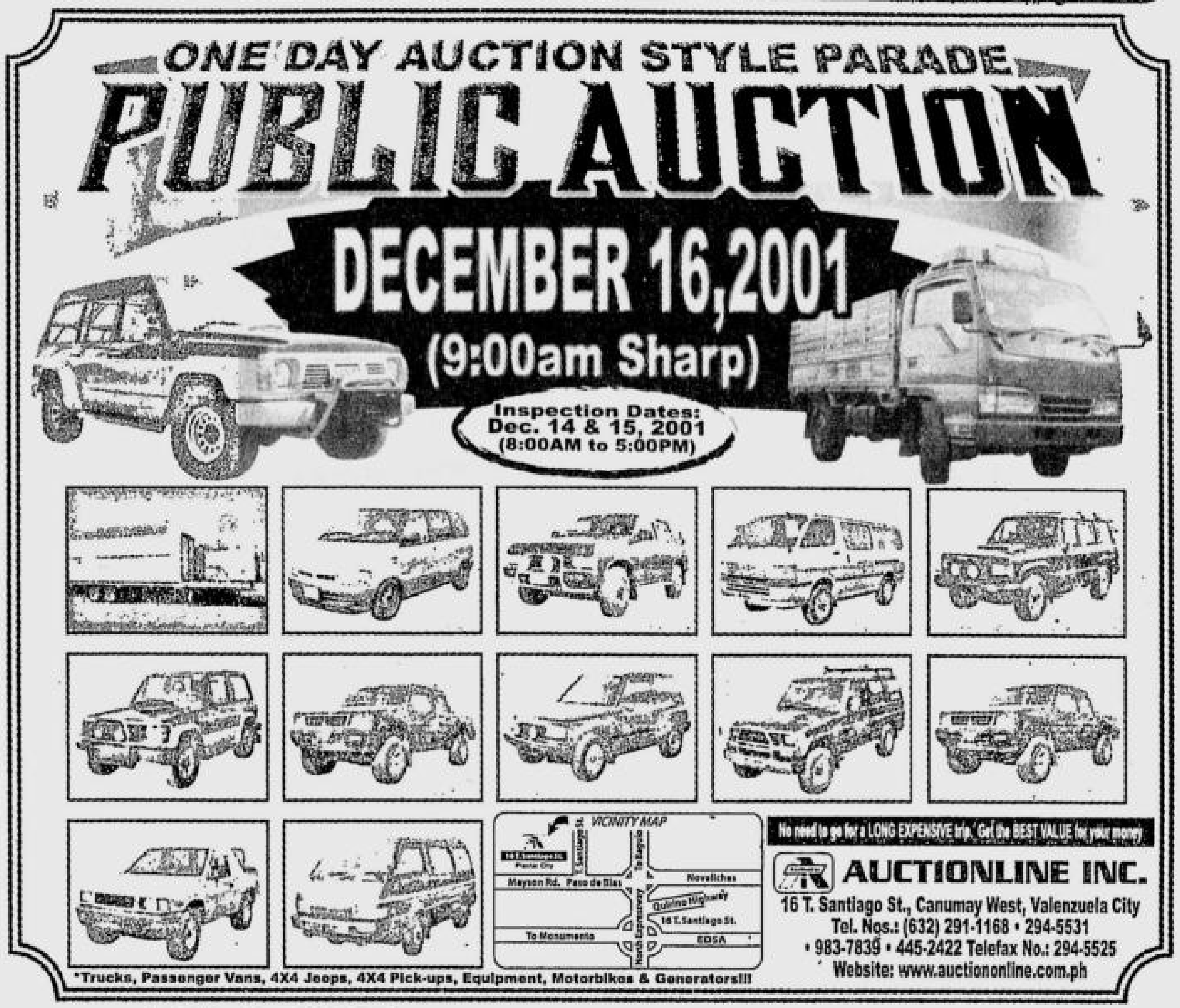

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Charging fraud, losing bet wants ARMM polls voided

COTABATO CITY—Businessman Ebrahim Paglas III, who lost in the Nov. 26 gubernatorial elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, has asked the Commission on Elections to void the results of the balloting in the five-province region.

In a 22-page petition, Paglas accused the administration of committing "massive fraud" during the elections.

He cited the discovery of previously filled ballots in several areas of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur and Sulu on election day.

The National Movement for Free Elections had earlier recommended holding in abeyance the declaration of winning candidates until after an investigation was conducted.

"We want to know if the fraud committed was isolated or was the general trend," Fr. Eliseo Mercado, Namfrel chair in the region, said.

In an interview with reporters here yesterday, Paglas said he was blaming President Macapagal-Arroyo for the fraud.

"I know she ordered it and it was very unfair to me and to the people of ARMM," Paglas said.

Aside from urging the poll body to nullify the results of the elections, Paglas also asked the Comelec to conduct a new election.

"*Panalo ako sa taong bayan pero talo ako sa sistema ng gobyerno* (I won before the people but I lost because of the system)," he said.

He said Malcañang threatened to slash ARMM mayors' funds if they did not support the government's candidate Parouk Hussin, for governor.***Anthony S. Allada with reports from Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

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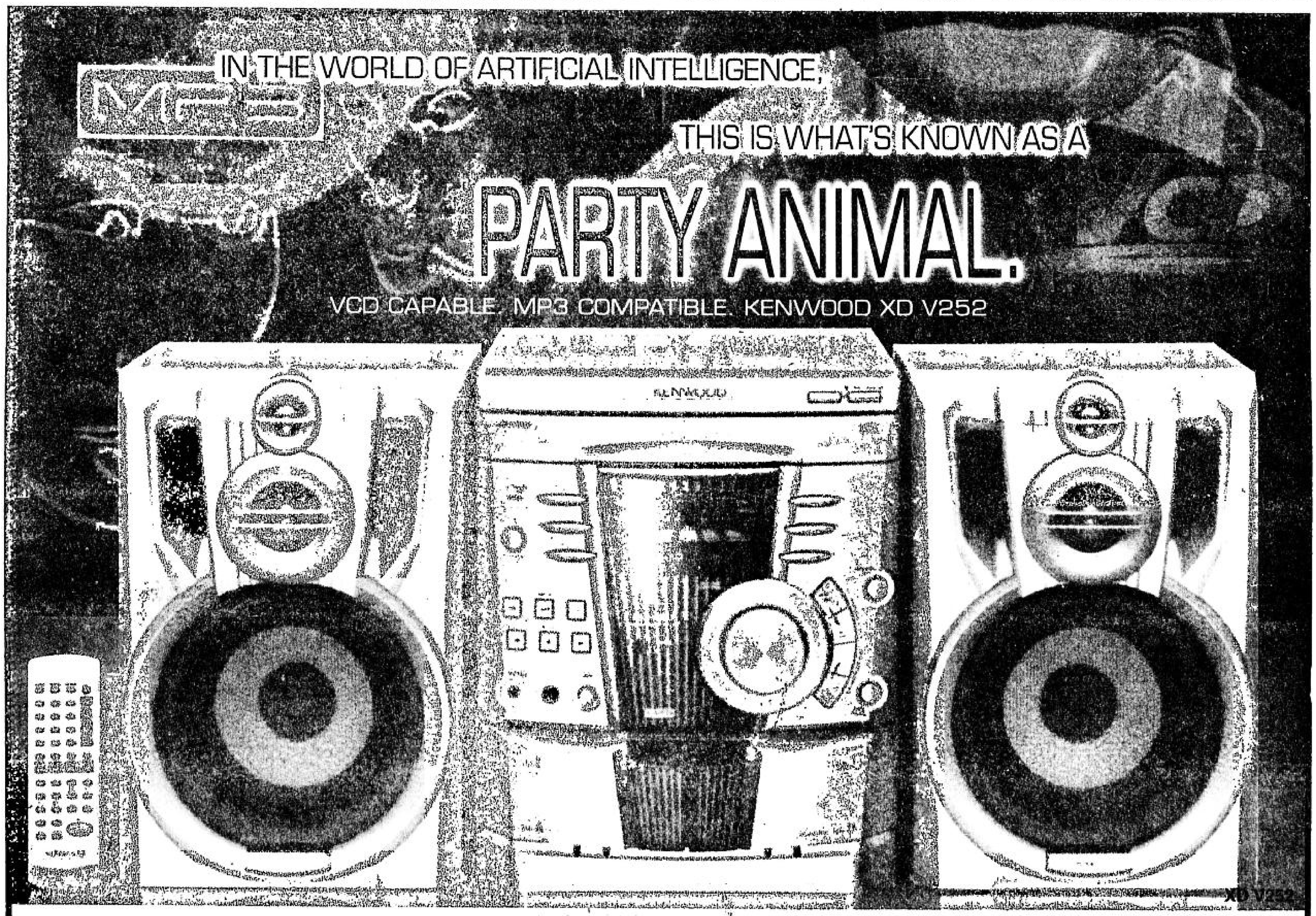
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GMA sends emissary to Mahathir

(From page A1)

"Maybe he did, but for security reasons I would rather not divulge such detailed portions of the message," she said.

In a separate interview, National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said Misuari would be deported "on or before Dec. 24."

That day marks the end of the 30-day period that Malaysia is authorized to detain Misuari for illegal entry.

On Thursday, a highly placed source at the Department of Foreign Affairs pegged the date at Dec. 20.

But the chair of the Central Mindanao chapter of the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) expressed doubt that the Philippine government would succeed in having Misuari deported.

Historically, "no Muslim country has handed over a Muslim leader to another country, not even to another Muslim country," Fr. Eliseo Mercado Jr. told INQ7.net. "How then can you expect Malaysia to turn over Misuari to a Christian country like the Philippines?"

Mercado also said Misuari was conferred an honorary title of nobility—Datu Panglima of Sangkaran, Malaysia—two years ago, making him an honorary member of Malaysia's royal family.

He said this could also complicate the situation.

"Nobody has seen Misuari," Mercado further pointed out. "The government says this and the Moro National Liberation Front says another, but nobody has seen or talked to him."

According to Mercado, Misuari is being held incommunicado "so as not to embarass the (Philippine) government."

The President said she thanked Mahathir through Gonzales for Misuari's immediate arrest.

She said she told Mahathir that she preferred Malaysia to investigate Misuari first but that the Philippine government was now ready to take him back and ease the pressure on the Prime Minister.

"If it becomes a sensitive issue as far as the Muslim population of Malaysia is concerned, we are ready to take him back . . ." she said.

Invoking "security considerations," the President refused to elaborate on the plans regarding the ex-governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and ex-chair of the MNLF.

"Remember what happened to Erap's arrest?" she added, referring to the pandemonium that marked the arrest of ousted President Joseph Estrada. "I think we should learn from that as well."

In Panamao, Sulu, civilians fought back and foiled an attempt by pro-Misuari forces to take over the town hall. Reports sent to Camp Aguinaldo said about 30 gunmen launched the attack around 7:30 p.m. Wednesday but Mayor Bassar Abdujarak organized a defense force and held them off.

Military units based nearby reportedly gave fire support. No casualties were reported. *With reports from Norman Bordadora and Martin P. Marfil*

Soldiers tie yellow . . .

(From page A1)

"We are employing the 'Deer hunting' type of operation, wherein we have now 'Deceived Sabaya, Enveloped their group, Engaged them in a firefight'—and what remains now is the 'Rescue of the hostages,'" Cimatu said.

Brig. Gen. Glicerio Sua, commander of the Task Force Comet, said they started tying yellow ribbons on the firearms since the start of the rescue efforts.

He said the ribbons would be removed only after the hostage crisis had ended and the soldiers started heading home.

"The yellow ribbon is a symbolism, a rallying point," Sua added. "It's an expression of the desire of the military to rescue the hostages and so they themselves would be home for Christmas."

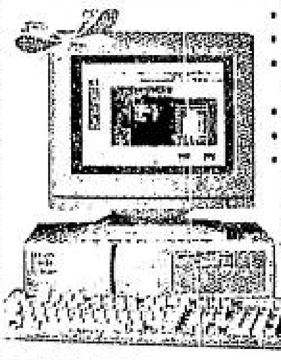
A group of US soldiers yesterday landed at the Edwin Andrews Air Base in Zamboanga aboard a military cargo plane.

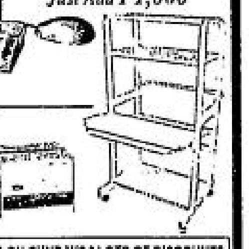
Agence France Presse quoted Lt. Col. Danilo Servando as telling reporters that the unspecified number of soldiers were all members of the "Special Operations Command" of the Hawaii-based US Pacific Command.

"We can't say what their purpose is," he said, describing their mission as "sensitive."

The AFP announced on Tuesday that more US military advisers were expected in the South in the coming months to train local troops going after the Abu Sayyaf, which the US government had identified as linked to terrorist suspect Osama bin Laden.

Two groups of US military advisers made preliminary visits to Zamboanga and Basilan earlier this month and in October to scout out barracks and training facilities. *With an AFP report*





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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4180, Series of 2001

RP rice terraces in peril, says UN World Heritage Committee

(From page A1)

The World Heritage in Danger List currently comprises 31 of the 708 sites on the World Heritage List.

They are put on the "endangered" list because their conservation is "threatened by natural causes or by human intervention."

The new sites included in the World Heritage List during Unesco's World Heritage Committee meeting here were the natural sites of the Brazilian Atlantic islands of Fernando de Noronha and Atol das Rocas, and the Cerrado Protected Areas, which include the national parks of Chapada dos Veadeiros and Emas.

Cuba got its Alejandro de Humboldt National Park listed. Russia had the district of Central Sikhote-Alin, Switzerland had the Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn area and United Kingdom had the East Devon Coast and Dorset included in the list.

Ten new cultural sites were also included in the list on Thursday: the Masada National Park in Israel, the Cultural Landscape of Fertoe-Neusiedlersee on the Austrian-Hungarian border, the Historic Center of the Town of Goias in Brazil, and the Historical Center in Vienna.

The Yungang Grottoes in China, the town of Provins in France, the Old Town of Lamu in Kenya, the Medina of Essaouira in Morroco, and the Churches of Peace in Jawor and Swidnica in Poland.

The Historic Center of Guimaraes in Portugal, the Mining Area of the Great Copper Mountain in Falun in Sweden, and the ancient city of Samarkand in Uzbekistan, dubbed the Crossroads of Cultures.

In addition, four already-listed sites were extended to include surrounding attractions.

The site of the Potala Palace in Tibet now also includes Norbulingka Palace, Ecuador's Galapagos Islands site was increased to cover a marine reserve, and Russia's Volcanoes of Kamchatka site now includes Kluchevskoy Nature Park.

In Kenya's Lake Turkana National Parks site, the Sibiloi/Central Island National Parks now also encompasses South Islan d National Park.

Unesco meanwhile removed Iguacu National Park in Brazil from the "endangered" list, following government measures against helicopter traffic over its impressive waterfalls—among the world's largest—and an illegal road cutting into the park.

The Unesco World Heritage Committee is expected to add over 30 new sites to its World Heritage List this year, and more new sites were expected to be announced this week. *AFP*

Santa...

(From page A1)

Claus, most Americans believe Kris Kringle drives a pickup truck, works as a motivational speaker and relaxes to easy-listening and classical music.

"People have this image of what this legendary character is like. What we wanted to do was find out who they thought this person was aside from what he does on the big day," said Alan Crockett, a Zogby spokesperson.

The poll of 1,043 "Santa believers" nationwide was conducted from Dec. 7-10 and released on Tuesday.

With his humble, down-to-Earth nature, Santa Claus would drive a pickup truck (27 percent) or possibly an SUV (25 percent).

Few thought he would get around in a sports car (4 percent).

As a person interested in helping others, he would work as a motivational speaker (24 percent) or, with his workshop experience, as a manufacturing manager (19 percent).

He'd vote as an Independent (43 percent) and prefer easy listening (29 percent) and classical (28 percent) music. Only 2 percent thought he would listen to New Age tunes.

Meanwhile in Athens, Georgia, Santa's reindeer are becoming a big hit.

"Why don't they fly out of the pen?" "Which one is Rudolph?"

These are some of the frequent questions posed by children who come to visit the four reindeer in Steve Jordan's farm and garden center.

"I tell them that these reindeer are here because the airport is right over there," Jordan said, pointing toward the Athens-Ben Epps Airport.

"On Christmas Eve, Santa Claus can land at the airport and hitch these guys up to fly in case his regular reindeer get tired."

Jordan's garden store welcomed a handful of the deer for the first time last holiday season. It was such a big hit, he decided to do it again, loaning the animals from a ranch in Hobbs, New Mexico.

This year, the pen is the temporary home to a large 4-year-old male reindeer and three smaller females. One of the females is a rare white reindeer, one of only seven in captivity, Jordan said.

Grown-ups often bring babies to the store, claiming the infants want to see the reindeer. But Jordan remains suspicious.

"There's no way a 1-year-old knows what reindeer are all about," he said. "It brings out the kid in everybody." *AP*

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PHILAM LIFE

Ramadan ends; Misa de Gallo begins

(From page A1)

Fasting yesterday, Catholics will mark the start of the Christmas season tomorrow, with the traditional dawn masses or "Misa de Gallo." Depending on the moon's visibility, Muslims will also celebrate Eid'l Fitr, the end of Ramadan, the month-long fasting season, either today or tomorrow.

Prof. Abu Sayyed Mansur-Lingga, chair of the Ulama Professional Executive Committee, said Ramadan would end today should the Muslim clerics see the moon Friday night.

"If the moon is not visible on Friday night, automatically the Eid'l Fitr will be celebrated on Sunday," Lingga said, adding that it would be a very joyous time for Muslims to join hands with Christians as they begin their dawn masses tomorrow.

"I would like to take this opportunity to greet our Muslim brothers and sisters a Blessed Ramadan and the Christians, a Blessed Christmas," said Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines president and Cotabato Archbishop Orlando Quevedo.

"We Christians also went into fasting, prayer and charity for peace in the world and in solidarity with our bothers and sisters in the Islamic faith," he said.

National holiday

For the first time ever, the country will mark the end of Ramadan as a national holiday, after President Macapagal-Arroyo declared Monday an official holiday, in recognition of the Muslim feast that falls this weekend.

Forgiveness, family, friendships and *fitra* (charity) were the common themes in Friday sermons delivered in major mosques throughout the country, to commemorate the end of 30 days of daily abstinence from food, water and sex in observance of one of the pillars of Islam, *Sawm* (fast).

During Eid'l Fitr or Hari Raya Puasa, fitra in the form of food—preferably a sack of rice—or cash is distributed to the poor by individual donors, through Muslim organizations or through religious leaders, explained Prof. Julkipli Wadi, college secretary of the UP Institute of Islamic Studies. Those who are non-income earners, however, need not give charity, said former UP IIS dean Ustadz Wadja Esmula, referring to an Islamic saying: "Religion is easy, not difficult."

"Fasting bridges the gap between the haves and have-nots," Esmula preached before the IIS Friday congregation in the prayer area at the Asian Center in UP. "In loving our fellow human beings, Islam commands us to love yourself as you love others," he said.

Mutual visits

Last week in this city, a heart-warming scene occurred at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Cotabato City when members of the Bishop-Ulama Forum (BUF) visited the Church.

Muslim preachers and the bishops also visited several mosques and churches here during its 17th BUF assembly.

Islamic preachers explained to the bishops and priests their manner of praying and the meaning of each religious act. Bishops and priests reciprocated by explaining to Muslim religious how Christians pray.

"In oneness with our Muslim brothers and sisters, in solidarity with them during Ramadan, we have reciprocal understanding where we offer prayers, fasting and alms-giving," said Fr. Jose Colin Bagaforo of the Archdiocesan pastoral center.

Mosques and churches here are decorated with colorful lights. Christian churches display the usual "belen" (nativity scene) and other Christmas decoration, while mosques were festooned with brilliant displays of the words "Hari Raya Puasa" using colored lights. *With a report from Samira Ali Gutoc*

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Tape irks Pinoy victims

RUFINO L. GONZALES II
Inquirer News Service

NEW YORK CITY—The tape showing Osama Bin Laden calmly talking about the planning of the Sept. 11 attacks angered the families of Filipino victims who perished when the twin towers of the World Trade Center collapsed.

"Now that the tape is finally shown, and it strongly suggests that he is behind all this, I want him dead," said Daisy Domingo, sister of Benilda Domingo who was working in one of the towers when the airplanes struck.

In Queens, Oscar Peralta, the father of WTC victim Carl Allen Peralta, became emotional and stormed out of his house halfway before the tape was finished. "I'm very angry, I hope they get him if he is not dead yet," Peralta said.

US releases . . .

(From page A1)

with the other as though it were a plane hitting a building.

On the same day the tape was released, American warplanes pressed the hunt for the al-Qaida leader and his supporters in the Tora Bora region, even as the Afghan Islamic Press reported that he had already escaped to an unknown place.

Washington's allies were quick to welcome the videotape as final proof of his guilt. "By boasting about his involvement in the evil attacks, Bin Laden confirms his guilt," said British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw. "This totally vindicates the action that we, the United States and the international coalition have taken in Afghanistan."

In Pakistan, chief government spokesperson Gen. Rashid Quereshi said the sight of Bin Laden praising the suicide attacks and saying the destruction exceeded his estimates proved that Islamabad had made "the right decision" in supporting Washington.

The United Arab Emirates was quick to accept it as conclusive evidence. "There is no doubt in my mind that Bin Laden was behind those operations. The tape confirms that in a way that leaves no room for doubt," UAE Information Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zaid al-Nahayan said.

"They (al-Qaida) deserve the punishment that befell them. I go further to say that we, Arabs and Muslims, should punish them for offending Islam, Muslims and Arabs."

Canada and Israel joined other nations in praising the release of the video, while Samir Rantisi, a senior adviser of the Palestinian Ministry of Information, said it proved that Bin Laden and al-Qaida were solely responsible for the attacks, ending reckless speculation which implicated even the Palestinians.

Raanan Gissin, spokesperson for Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, called the tape "unequivocally incriminating evidence about the involvement of al-Qaida in terrorism."

Despite the poor quality of the video, the British government said it had no doubt it was genuine. It had been subjected to numerous tests by US scientists who compared Bin Laden's voice and image to those in previous tapes, Downing Street said.

"The matches in every case were identical. So, we have no doubt at all about the authenticity of the tape," a statement from Prime Minister Tony Blair's office read.

Propaganda value

Middle East reaction was mixed, and some Arabs dismissed the footage as a propaganda fake.

"This is shameful," said Abdul Latif Arabiat, head of Jordan's mainstream Islamist party, the Islamic Action Front. "Do the Americans really think the world is that stupid to think that they would believe that this tape is evidence?"

In a region where many choose to believe theories that the Sept. 11 attacks were a plot by Israeli secret services to discredit Muslims, some ordinary Arabs were also skeptical.

"This tape has been fabricated, it's not real," said Jordanian car merchant Ibrahim Zaher as he watched a broadcast of the tape by Qatar's al-Jazeera satellite television.

"The translation is wrong and we hardly heard his voice. America just wants to implicate Muslims," said Nadia Saqr, an Egyptian mother of two.

Mohamed Salah, an Egyptian expert on militant Islamic movements who writes for the London-based Arabic daily Al-Hayat, said Bin Laden may have left the tape behind in the Afghan city of Jalalabad on purpose so the Americans would show it and show the world that he played a role in the terrorist attacks in the United States. Bin Laden no longer has anything to lose by claiming responsibility, Salah said.

But according to the Council on American-Islamic Relations, an organization representing US Muslims, the videotape was proof of Bin Laden's complicity in the attacks.

Yossef Bodansky, author of a book about Bin Laden, said the video demonstrated fully that the Saudi-born leader of the al-Qaida network was deeply implicated.

"It's a remarkable document. How can you go further than that," said Stephen Hess, a political expert at the Washington-based Brookings Institution.

It was unknown who made the tape, an amateurish recording edited with English subtitles provided by both US government and private translators.

It showed a meeting reportedly between Bin Laden, an unidentified Saudi sheik and other men somewhere in southern Afghanistan last month.

The tape had a homemade quality to it, punctuated by background noises, coughing and a shot or two of the cameraman's shoes as he shakily panned the camera from one spot to another.

The sound quality on the tape was so poor that even native Arabic speakers had to rely on the translations, undercutting its impact in the Arab world.

AP, AFP, Reuters

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OPINION

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Vol. 17 No. 7
ISSN 0116-2642

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The PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo) corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati • P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office, 1263 Makati City, Philippines • Our new telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments; Editorial Fax 897-4793, 897-4794; Advertising 897-4807; Circulation 527-33-42, 527-33-46, 528-01-83, 528-01-86 and 528-02-13. Fax: 528-02-34.

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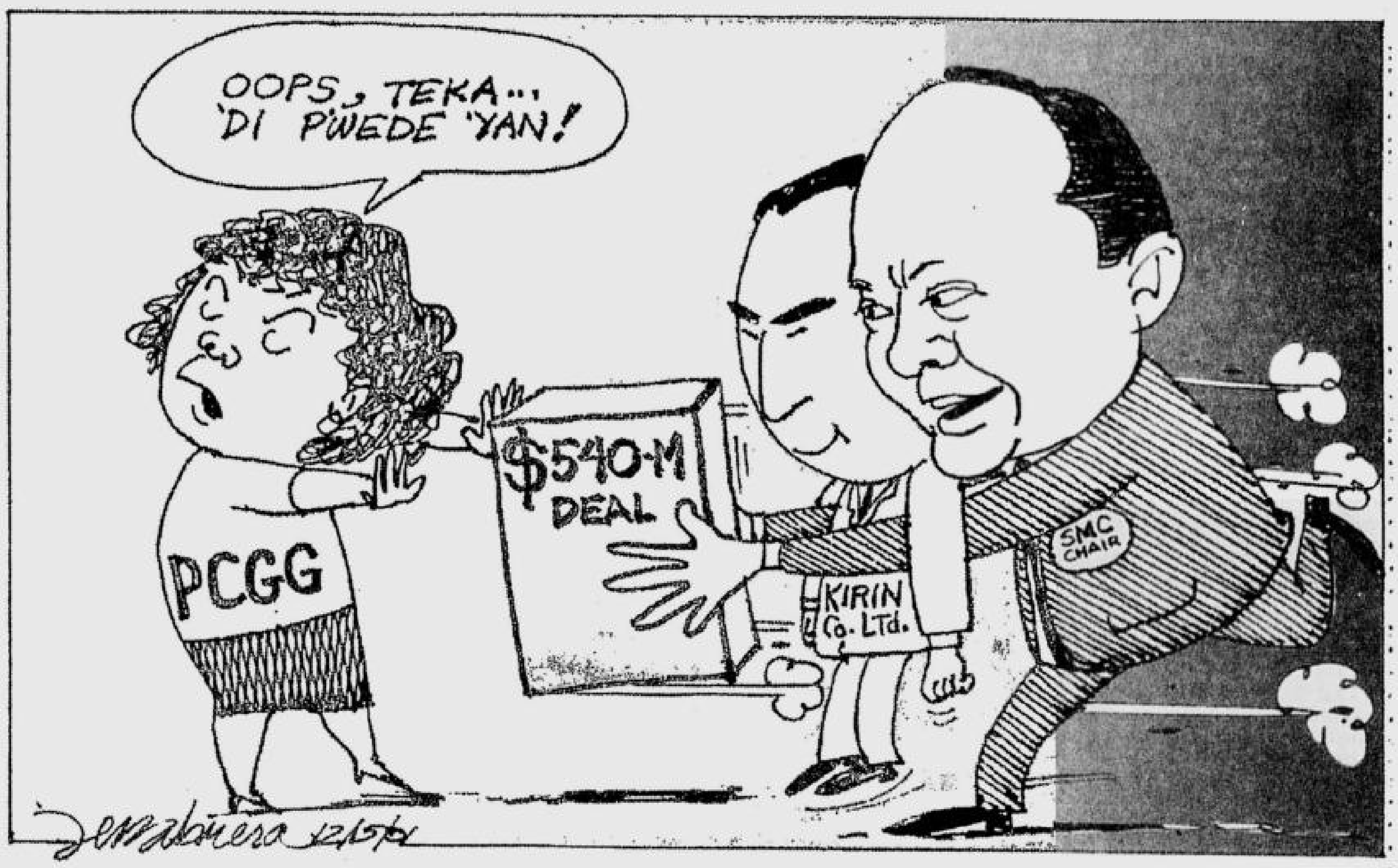
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EDITORIALS

JUSTICE delayed is justice denied, true. But we also have to make sure that justice delivered posthaste is really justice. It should be so in particular with the coconut levy funds. We all would like to see that case settled as soon as possible, or at least within the lifetime of the coconut farmers from whose backs the levy was worked off. But we also want to make sure any settlement there truly meets the demands of justice. That is to say, that it does not benefit those who wreaked the iniquity to begin with, and that it clearly benefits the victims themselves.

We support in this respect the move of the Presidential Commission on Good Government to block Eduardo Cojuangco's proposal to sell 15 percent of San Miguel Corp. to Kirin Co. Ltd.

At the very least, as PCGG Chair Haydee Yorac says, that sale would diminish the value of the shares held by the government. A better alternative would be to auction off those shares, which include the 27 percent of SMC bought with the coco levy funds and the 14 percent held by the Social Security System and the Government Service Insurance System. The Kirin deal would bring in $540 million, the auction should bring in $2.3 billion. The latter should, moreover, redound to the benefit of the public, and the coconut farmers for the most part.

Which is the more important point. The Kirin deal benefits primarily Cojuangco, which adds a whole new dimension of iniquity to it. He should not be rewarded for the coco levy, he should be punished for it. Whether or not Yorac explicitly said that any compromise agreement on the coconut levy funds should not allow the Marcos cronies, like Cojuangco, Lobregat and Juan Ponce Enrile to keep their plundered loot, is unimportant. What is important is that it is fundamentally true and may not be lost sight of. Morality may not take a backseat to expedience. Justice may not take a backseat to convenience.

The whole concept of using the coco levy funds to buy into SMC was iniquitous to begin with. Sen. Edgardo Angara, a founder of the Accra law firm, which brokered the purchase, now says the deal was done on behalf of the coconut farmers. But if we remember right, the coconut levy was justified as a way of raising funds for projects that would improve coconut farming. How buying into SMC could possibly improve coconut farming, only Angara can say. As well indeed as Cojuangco and Lobregat who made the decision to use the funds for it.

The least that can be done now is to make sure the money that was put up to buy the SMC shares benefit the people who put up that money, who are the coconut farmers. And to make sure as well the people who ripped them off do not get to do so a second time around.

That can be done by decreeing the disputed SMC shares a public fund. That is the first thing that needs to be done. It was public funds that made those shares possible. It is public funds that those shares should revert to. The coconut farmers deserve every centavo of those sequestered shares, plus interest and all. Their years of deprivation and suffering—the levy was worked off dirt-poor farmers, who lived more destitute lives than the characters in "Grapes of Wrath"—more than makes it so.

The ball is now in the court of the Supreme Court. The case has been laid at its doorstep, and we expect to see its ruling on the status of the disputed shares any time now. We have every confidence the justices will live up to their name and see that justice is done. After all, they themselves will have to answer to a higher court than the one they preside over, one whose judgments are more final and binding. That is the court of history.

Go

SEN. Edgardo Angara says he may not reveal the identities of Accra's clients, including those who own the holding companies that have a stake in SMC. There is, he says, such a thing as client confidentiality, which is legally binding in all self-respecting countries.

Well, there is such a thing as national interest, too, which takes precedence over client confidentiality. That, too, is legally binding in all self-respecting countries. That was the principle that compelled Clarissa Ocampo to come forth and tell the world what she knew about Jose Velarde in last year's impeachment trial. Client confidentiality ends where unearthing wrongdoing begins. There is no more epic wrongdoing than the rip-off of the coconut farmers by Marcos and his cronies. Marcos is dead, his cronies are not. They must answer for their crimes.

And there is such a thing too as moral responsibility, which takes precedence over legal technicality. Law is the servant and justice is the master. It can never be the other way around.

Special treatment

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

IT was bad enough when Joseph Estrada complained of his detention at Camp Crame and President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo ordered his transfer to a new cottage at Sta. Rosa, Laguna, with air-conditioning, curtains and other appropriate furnishings.

It was worse when the hard-to-please Erap, accustomed to the good life among his extended families, also griped about his improved lodgings, and the ever-obliging President Macapagal moved him to the Veterans Memorial Medical Center.

Many people disapprove of Erap's deferential treatment, but I suppose this is due him as a former president of the Philippines. After all, it's not every day that a sitting president is evicted from Malacañang and prosecuted for the heinous crime of plunder, among other serious offenses.

What is questionable, though, is why Jinggoy Estrada is sharing his distinguished sire's privileges simply because he is the son of his father.

Jinggoy's status hardly approaches that of his father, who was once our head of state. The son's only credential is that he used to be an ordinary municipal mayor and became the president of the mayor's league only because Erap was the president of the country.

Recently, Jinggoy was allowed to transfer to another hospital because of his alleged heart ailment. The former actor complained of chest pains and the Sandiganbayan believed he was not merely acting.

I hope the Sandiganbayan sought the opinion of objective cardiologists instead of relying only on the say-so of Jinggoy's own doctors. Their professional independence is suspect if only because their patient is paying their fees. There is also the relevant question of their competence as heart specialists compared to that of their dissenting colleagues.

Other detention prisoners are cramped in filthy and oppressively hot cells with little sleeping space, if at all. Unlike the Estradas, many of them are accused only of minor crimes but cannot afford the needed bail for their release. Erap and his son, while not granted bail, should still be grateful for the comparative comfort of their present quarters. Interestingly, they are now asking for a Christmas furlough, for themselves only and not their fellow inmates.

As if all this coddling of the Estradas were not enough, the country is confronted by another absurdity in the case of Nur Misuari. After the flare-up of the MNLF rebellion reportedly at his command, the failed ARMM governor disappeared, leaving his followers in the lurch. He reappeared later in Malaysia, where he was arrested for entering the country without valid travel papers.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad notified the Philippines of Misuari's capture and offered to send him back. Unbelievably, our own President refused to accept him and told the Malaysians they could keep him. Ms Macapagal was apparently washing her hands of the troublesome fugitive, who is actually on our official "wanted" list for various serious crimes.

Ms Macapagal's reply must have mystified Mahathir. Usually, it is the country of origin that asks for the return of its escaped suspects for prosecution or punishment. The Philippines is requesting the extradition of Charlie "Atong" Ang, Yolanda Ricaforte, Michael Rey Aquino and Cesar Mancao by the United States and Rodolfo Pacificador by Canada. The United States is nagging us for the extradition of Mark Jimenez. President Macapagal has reversed the process in the Misuari case and by her lonesome self unilaterally amended the rules on international comity.

Because of President Macapagal's rejection of Prime Minister Mahathir's unconditional courtesy, Malaysia may be considering other options. One of these could be giving Misuari safe passage out of its territory if only to get rid of the unwelcome foreigner.

Undocumented aliens are subject to only light penalties, if at all indicted for their minor offense. On the other hand, the crimes imputed to Misuari include rebellion, with a maximum penalty of *reclusion perpetua*, and malversation of billions of ARMM funds, which could constitute plunder. No wonder he is seeking asylum in some friendly state and the assistance of the United Nations to escape our jurisdiction.

If that happens, Ms Macapagal will have evaded her sworn duty to execute the laws as part of her solemn constitutional commitment when she took her oath of office as President of the Philippines.

It is reported, though, that reacting to the widespread criticism of her quizzical behavior, Ms Macapagal has reconsidered her unusual stand and is now willing to accept the notorious fugitive. Once delivered to us (before it is too late because of Ms Macapagal's dilly-dallying), Misuari will be arrested and made to face the criminal charges against him.

We can only hope at this time that our fickle President will not change her mind again. Significantly, our government has not yet made a formal request for Misuari's return that she may want to retract later.

The only other thing we have to guard against is the intention of our government to roll the red carpet for Misuari and treat him as another celebrity like the Estradas. I for one am disturbed by the plan to comfortably confine him in either Fort Magsaysay at Nueva Ecija or the cottage originally assigned to Estrada at Sta. Rosa, Laguna. And what if he complains like Erap?

The sub-standard detention cells for ordinary persons are out of the question, of course. They are not fit for the likes of Joseph and Jinggoy Estrada and, now, Nur Misuari. These notorious celebrities are what are known as "security risks" who must be given special treatment by the State.

First, we were shocked by the cushy privileges of influential convicted prisoners like Romeo Jolosjos. Then we could only shake our heads over the unctuous amenities extended to Joseph Estrada and his son Jinggoy. And now comes another dubious dignitary to be generously given exceptional and undeserved attention, the Honorable Nur Misuari. The Macapagal administration must also be afraid of him.

Whatever happened to the Equal Protection Clause?

A celebration of migrant workers' social capital

COMMENTARY

Jeremaiah M. Opiniano
Institute on Church and Social Issues

ON DEC. 18, the world celebrates International Migrants Day (IMD). The campaign for an International Migrants Day was initiated four years ago through ceremonies organized by the Philippine Migrants Rights Watch (PMRW), a registered civil society network working for migrants' rights, and the Asian Partnership in International Migration (Apim), under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The campaign for an International Migrants Day, which was the brainchild of Dr. Anwar Fazal of Apim, gained strength worldwide as many civil society groups joined the campaign. On Dec. 4 last year, the United Nations General Assembly approved a resolution making Dec. 18 "International Day of Solidarity with Migrants."

It was on Dec. 18, 1990 when the United Nations ratified the International Convention for the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, otherwise known as the Migrant Workers Convention (MWC). However, only 17 countries, including the Philippines, have ratified the convention. Three more country signatories are needed to enforce the convention. Noticeably, many of the signatories are labor-sending countries, with the Philippines being the world's second-largest labor exporter behind Mexico (another signatory to the convention).

While many of the world's labor-receiving countries do not make a fuss about the Migrant Workers Convention, our global leaders have also been unmindful of the contributions of migrant workers. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported that remittances from migrants worldwide have soared to $70 billion a year, an amount that is greater than total governmental aid to developing states. But in a capitalism-driven atmosphere of globalization, where the welfare of people are being set aside for profit, migrant workers are fast becoming economic commodities, putting their dignity as persons at risk.

This makes the International Migrants Day celebration relevant. Dec. 18 is a day when we remember that migrants' rights are human rights, and that states and those involved in the business of labor migration must recognize that. For the PMRW, this is relevant because this means that we must recognize the dignity of migrant workers and their families. (Incidentally the PMRW, together with the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, will mark International Migrants Day with a forum on "The Social Costs of Migration," to be held at the Bayview Park Hotel.)

Perhaps the key word in this celebration of International Migrants Day is "solidarity." Dec. 18 is a global celebration wherein migrant advocates and the migrants themselves bond together, discuss mutual concerns and hopefully take common action. In the scheduled International Migrants Day celebrations this year around the world, migrant workers' solidarity is the approach being employed by different groups. For example, the Asian Migrant Centre (AMC) in Hong Kong will gather Asian domestic workers, including Filipinos, to protest the Hong Kong government's plan to cut the minimum wage of domestic workers by 15 to 20 percent starting next year.

Gathering migrant workers and their families in solidarity is a meaningful way of celebrating International Migrants Day. The celebration is an opportunity for us to prepare reflections and actions so that we can gather migrants together in the midst of problems that affect their dignity, rights and pursuit of justice. International Migrants Day is also a call for concerted and unified action among the different stakeholders (both locally and globally).

With the difficulties facing the campaign to ratify the Migrant Workers Convention, and the inability of both labor-sending and labor-receiving states to protect migrant workers, we need to think of alternatives to solve the problems of migrants. This is where social capital, or the bonds of mutual support and trust that exist between people, becomes relevant. Dec. 18 is a constant reminder that migrants and their families can be empowered to solve their own problems without waiting for national and international laws and instruments to do it for them.

With social capital, Filipino communities abroad are helping to address the problems of their fellow Filipino and Asian migrants who are in distress. Because of social capital, some returning migrants are grouping themselves together to facilitate their reintegration into their communities of origin. Because of social capital, Filipino migrant associations abroad are even donating some of their earnings for the development of their communities.

Dec. 18 is a day for celebration of migrant workers' social capital and the possibilities for liberating action that it can bring. Building the social capital of migrants and their families—both here and abroad—is the next challenge in addressing their troublesome plight. This leaves us with the reflection that migrants' social capital can be a strategic approach for migrants and their families to fully enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Socio-Economic Summit 2001 aspires to be different

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

A FEW days after the Sept. 11 bombings, opposition Sen. Blas Ople suggested on the Senate floor that the administration convene "an emergency economic summit" to deal with the global economic slowdown caused by the terrorist attacks. President Macapagal picked up Ople's suggestion and organized the recently concluded National Socio-Economic Summit of 2001, drawing participants from various sectors. Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, who co-chaired the summit's executive committee with Ople, said in his remarks that it was designed to help "sustain economic growth and to mitigate the impact of global adversity, particularly on our poorest people." In other words, said Romulo, amid the global downturn, the summit hoped to "shift the economy's center of gravity to the domestic market" and draw from our "inner strengths."

* * *

An understandable skepticism among some sectors has greeted the summit. Some said it would go the way of many other summits in the past whose achievements have been mainly non-existent. Socio-Economic Deputy Secretary General Raphael Lotilla, one of its workhorses, sent me some documents on the pre-summit preparations, and I must say that on paper this one does promise to be, as Senate President Franklin Drilon put it, a "real working summit." Of course, whether it would ultimately deliver the targeted results would depend on many things, not the least the close monitoring of actions taken or not taken.

Earlier I cited two factors that promise to bring targeted results: the close working relationship between the administration-controlled Congress and the executive, and the President's capacity to work hard and drive her people hard. I would put down as a third major factor the elaborate pre-summit preparations, which meant setting up 12 working panels on the priority issues that the summit seeks and promises to address, mostly in the next six months. Since October, members of the various panels, who were drawn from the executive branch, Congress, the business sector, the academe and the NGOs, met regularly to put the most urgent issues and action plans together.

* * *

I took a look at the action plans of the 12 working panels, the "matrix of issues and action agenda," and noted that each batch sets down priority issues to be addressed, which were, in turn, itemized into very specific measures, each with a definite timetable and the member of Congress or head of an agency or organization to be held "responsible" for addressing them. I note, for instance, that under the panel on "financial and fiscal issues," the timetable for "ensuring correct withholding of taxes on salaries" in order to raise revenues is expected to be completed by the first quarter of 2002, with the BIR as the responsible agency. In the matrix of issues and action agenda for the working panel on peace, order and security, "intensification of efforts to rid the PNP of scalawags" is targeted for the first semester of 2002 by the DILG/Napolcom/PNP. To the cynics that looks like a tall order, but *vamos a ver*. The specific targets and timetables make monitoring easier, but of course, this also makes it easier to render judgment on the summit's success or failure.

* * *

A political pundit, noting how President Macapagal and the First Gentleman stayed long at the well-attended birthday party of Sen. Renato Cayetano last Wednesday evening at the Makati Sports Club, commented that she is truly learning how to handle her allies in Congress. Doubtless, in the narrow partisan polarization that is very evident in the Senate, she has come to value every ally, especially now that her administration has promised to deliver on the goals of the Socio-Economic Summit, which include specific legislative targets.

Cayetano is one of four lawyers in the PPC in the Senate and he has been among her staunchest allies in the various hearings where the First Couple was the "defendant." Ms Macapagal's attendance at his party was her way of showing appreciation. In addition, even before the marathon blue ribbon committee hearing last Friday where Pacifico Marcelo was the key witness was scheduled by its chair Joker Arroyo, the Palace had already scheduled an exclusive dinner for the 13 senators that same day, doubtless in yet another effort to cement alliances. The mood that evening among the 12 senators (minus the 13th coalition senator, Noli de Castro, who was taping a show) reportedly was that they were happy that the President was finally recognizing their support for her.

* * *

Social events have a way of drawing protagonists together, happily in a civilized manner. Last Tuesday evening the big wedding of Sen. Tito Sotto's favorite daughter, Lala, and Vincent de Leon, scion of a rich Nueva Ecija clan, at the Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park had 17 pairs of *ninongs* and *ninangs*, led by President Macapagal. The interesting thing was the political composition of the sponsors, which included five opposition senators—Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel, Loi Ejercito, Edgardo Angara, Rodolfo Biazon and Teresa Oreta—and one from the PPC, Joker Arroyo. Ms Macapagal marched down the aisle with Pimentel, who earlier had demanded that she show up at the Senate hearing to confront her accuser Marcelo. Then all eyes were on Joker who linked arms with Loi Ejercito as they marched down the aisle. The two senators were seen smiling at each other, even though Arroyo had been, to quote the media, "the lion of the impeachment trial" that ousted her husband.

* * *

Catch Vice President Tito Guingona this Sunday, Dec. 16, and next Sunday, Dec. 23, on "Radyo Balintataw," the show I co-host with Cecile Guidote-Alvarez at 9:15 p.m. every Sunday over dzRH. Guingona will discuss the various programs the Department of Foreign Affairs and the administration are undertaking for overseas Filipino workers to help cushion the impact of a global economic downturn.

* * *

A few weeks back, in an effort to contribute to the "holiday economics" of the long All Saints' Day break, I wrote a light piece about the new "GMA look," based on an interview with the President's volunteer fashion consultant, model Joanne Zapanta-Andrada, who coordinates her wardrobe with designers Inno Sotto and JC Buendia. In that column, I wrote that Paris-based hair stylist Franck Provost cut her hair once, but Gener Miranda now maintains it as her full-time hair stylist. I got a number of letters from hair stylist Leo Espinosa's clients, among them my niece, Maja Olivares-Co, and Celine Abella, who wanted to set the record straight: Espinosa is the person behind "Ms Macapagal's great new hairstyle" and Provost never cut her hair. Actually, Ms Macapagal told reporters at last Saturday night's INQUIRER party that Provost did cut her hair once. I also learned from other sources that Espinosa cuts it once a month and Miranda maintains it regularly.

Costs of domestic violence

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

CAGAYAN DE ORO—I'm writing this in one of the Internet cafés that have sprouted in the immediate vicinity of Xavier University, yet one more sign of the vitality and dynamism of Cagayan de Oro that has made it truly a gateway to Mindanao's future.

I have been in this city since Thursday, to speak at the third and final action workshop-forum on violence against women sponsored by Pilipina with support from the United Nations Fund for Women (Unifem), East and Southeast Asia office. As I write this, we have just concluded a roundtable discussion with local media women on guidelines for the coverage of crimes of violence against women and children, as well as on issues that touch on gender, violence and the power of the media. The day before, over a hundred participants, including barangay officials from all over the city and officials of towns around the province, took part in a similar exercise. The focus of the discussions, though, was on what can be done at the local level to address the needs of women and children who are victims of violence.

I have taken it as a positive sign that in our fora with local executives and barangay leaders, from La Trinidad in Benguet to Tacloban to here, I have seen a lot of males in the audience. And their attendance is not just "token" for they are very active participants and, judging from their statements, very much involved in confronting the issues of violence against women, particularly domestic violence.

Leaders of their communities, they attest to the demands made on the time and attention of local authorities by the victims of domestic violence and by the repercussions of a problem that goes well beyond the perimeter of a home and family.

* * *

HOW much does domestic violence "cost"? There is, of course, the unfathomable cost of psychological and emotional harm done to the battered spouse or children, and to the children who may not be battered but who have to live with the daily reality of violence at home.

What does it cost society to have an entire generation of children reared on the concept that the only way to resolve conflict is through physical violence? What kind of society evolves from a home setting where one parent habitually puts down the other, turning the "smallest democracy in society," which is the UN definition of family, into an autocracy and war zone?

Aside from this immeasurable price, there are very real costs in peso terms. There is the cost to the victim-survivor, who must spend for transportation to the hospital or health center for treatment, and the costs of treatment itself. If she chooses to bring the abuser to court, there are costs entailed in getting a lawyer, paying repeated visits to the barangay chair, the police, the court. If she seeks shelter in a crisis center, the center will have to answer for her daily needs as well as those of her children.

Then there are the opportunity costs. If the woman is employed, she loses workdays and wages while she stays at home or in the hospital, recovering from her injuries. If she is self-employed, there is an opportunity cost, the lost income she could have made if she weren't too ashamed or weak to show herself in public. Her employer faces productivity losses, and the community loses the woman's economic contributions.

At the same time, government resources are strained. The barangay officials spend precious time and effort trying to resolve the conflicts between warring partners, while seeking to protect the battered spouse. Agencies like the Department of Social Welfare and Development expend resources and personnel hours looking after the victims' welfare. Statistics from the DSWD show that nearly 75 percent of all the "women in especially difficult circumstances" it served in 1998 were victim-survivors of domestic violence.

* * *

SO we must beg to disagree with those who say that domestic violence is a "private" matter, a problem confined to the couple and to their family. Domestic violence is very much a public problem, as public resources are already being spent to address its consequences.

It's ironic, indeed, that while the DSWD, government hospitals, police and local officials are not only aware but very much involved in addressing the problems of domestic violence, laws and policies have yet to address the reality and scope of the problem.

There are at present more than 10 pending bills in the House and Senate on domestic violence. The usually sluggish legislative processes seem to have speeded up with the unusual amount of media attention on the issue, spurred no doubt by the suicide of Maria Teresa Carlson. Women's groups are in fact quite optimistic about the passage of domestic violence legislation within the lifetime of the 12th Congress.

But beyond a more responsive and realistic law, we must also, as a society, confront the social structures and arrangements that have made domestic violence proliferate and become an "accepted" feature of family life. How do we treat each other as men and women? How have we raised our daughters and sons? As the local executives I have talked with attest, the problem has gone way beyond the private sphere, and is a problem we must face together as a society.

* * *

QUITE apart from "official duties," there has also been time for socials and get-togethers. Thursday night, we took some time off from work to take part in a women's get-together, the Christmas party of women from Pilipina and Abanse! Pinay held in the home of Cynthia Rosales, a sister in Pilipina and connected with the Mindanao office of the Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor.

There was an exchange of gifts, which we visitors from Manila could not take part in because we didn't know about it. But that didn't mean we didn't leave the celebration without our own gifts.

The plague

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

SOMETIMES while reading the friars' chronicles one is reminded vividly of the stories written by Isabel Allende or Gabriel Garcia Marquez, with all the malevolent spirits and demons flying through the air. Of course, one could say these were mere fancies or gross superstition, but in the hands of a talented writer even children's nightmares become works of art.

Fr. Pedro Murillo-Velarde isn't a bad story teller and here he is telling us about the year of the plague:

In 1628, Manila and its environs were beset by a plague or epidemic that killed many of the people. Some died suddenly and those who survived longest lived for no more than 12 hours.

It was said that the blacks who were brought over from India to be sold were sick from the bad treatment they had received and they passed on their illness to the rest of the populace. Others attributed it to infected fish that was eaten by the poor.

Several cadavers were autopsied but the cause could not be found. The only thing that was obvious was that the plague continued and the only remedy for it was *triaca*, an ancient pharmaceutical remedy composed of opium and other ingredients.

Seeing how quickly people were dying, it looked as if the colony was finished and the islands would be lost once and for all. Aside from the pain of the afflicted, it was pitiful to see so many men and women left widowed, fathers without children and children without parents.

Everyone searched for remedies. The priests spent days and nights hearing confession and assisting the sick and the dying and bringing holy oil to those who were in need. They also brought *triaca* for the relief of the sick after this remedy was discovered.

In the village of San Miguel, one of the sick told the priest who was administering confession that he saw two mysterious figures hovering over the place, but once he received absolution they left, leaving a pestilential stench. The priest spread the story throughout the town and ordered the residents to prepare themselves for confession the following day under the patronage of Maria Santisima and St. Michael. A novena was prayed, litanies were recited and discipline was practiced in church along with penances and other prayers asking the Lord for mercy.

God demonstrated his mercy to a devout soul who witnessed a ship navigating through the air piloted by the common enemy. However, the enemy was not able to enter San Miguel because superior forces prevented him.

Malignant spirits were also seen in the outskirts of Manila. There were also horrible phantasms whose mere sight could cause death.

With such grave danger so near, many changed their lives and were truly converted after making a good confession.

Here was seen true charity where poor natives, ignoring the danger to their own lives, assisted the sick. A pious couple nursed the afflicted, never leaving their side until the patients died or regained their health. Bro. Antonio de Miranda, a nurse at the College of San Jose, was instructed by the father provincial, Juan de Bueras, to take care of the poor natives. The poisonous plague hit him with such violence that he almost had no time to receive the Sacraments and he died in Manila in October 1628.

On the night of Nov. 25 of the same year, the church of the College of San Jose collapsed. Thick slabs of stone fell and their impact was felt in nearby dwellings. One of the stone pillars started to sway and the walls collapsed from the weight, bringing the roof down with such a loud noise that it was heard more than two musket shots away.

Many people came out of their houses to see what had occurred and gave thanks to God that no one was killed in the disaster since the day before there were confessions and Masses. The havoc would have been great if the church had collapsed then. The very reverend Augustinian fathers later liberally offered the Jesuits use of their church to celebrate the feasts of St. Francis Xavier and the Circumcision.

The crime of the year was the theft of the Blessed Sacrament. The archbishop of Manila, D. Miguel Garcia Serrano, who was a devotee had observed a solemn feast exposing the Blessed Sacrament in the cathedral a few days before Christmas. Malignant furies must have entered the hearts of the thieves causing them to commit the crime. The archbishop was so distraught that he left his palace barefoot and because of the great affection he had for the Company, he went to the college to inform the Jesuits.

Everyone tried in their own way to placate the furies. There were processions in the city, public supplications and severe penances, and Manila was painted with the same colors as the penitent Nineveh in the Scriptures. The archbishop was beset by a profound melancholy and wore nothing but black vestments. From then on, he began a perpetual fast eating only herbs and water. He slept on the floor, using a stone for his pillow and punished his flesh severely.

In a procession held in Manila in March of the following year, the archbishop was seen covered from head to foot with ashes, barefoot and with a rope around his throat. Finally on the eve of the feast of Corpus Christi, he died saying, "*Alla, alla voy, Señor*."

Runaway

YOUNGBLOOD

G.M.

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

I AM an expert at running away. I have invented different reasons and methods for doing so, to the extent that I can actually hide the fact that I am trying to escape. And now that I think about it, it seems that the stages of my life have been defined by the instances when I tried to get away from something.

It was some time between kindergarten and prep that I first tried to run away from home. I can't recall now why I wanted to; I just know that I was mad at my mother and wanted to show her how much. So while my friends were blissfully watching "Sesame Street" and playing with their Barbies, I packed my favorite pink pajamas and scrawled a goodbye message in black ink on our refrigerator door. I didn't know the English word for "*layas*" but my training demanded that I write in English, and I was going to do it. The message came out: "Mother, I will go out of this house."

To add more drama, and just in case she didn't get it, I drew a series of stick figures depicting a little girl with a bag going out of a house. Frame by frame. Obviously, I had been exposed to comics and soap operas by then.

Needless to say, my resolution vanished after 10 minutes. I was called for lunch, took a nap and forgot about the bag with the pink pajamas stashed under my bed. However, the message stayed on the refrigerator door until about 10 years later, when it broke down and had to be replaced.

Fortunately for me, my mother was quite dense and never figured out what the message meant. Only a very perceptive aunt understood it. But that was years later, and by then, I had grown old enough to pretend to look confused and deny ever writing the thing.

My next attempt to run came next year. And it happened twice.

The first time was when my family forgot to pick me up, so I went home with a classmate. The second time, I deliberately hid from my father and went home with a classmate who lived two towns away. Fortunately or unfortunately, both times the parents of my classmates managed to get our phone number from me, but not before a few hours had passed and my family, both immediate and extended, frantically searched the city for me.

When I was finally returned home, they would ask, sometimes kindly, sometimes furiously, why I did those things. My 6-year old-brain never quite figured it out at that time, so I would just shrug and say "*Te mo,*" which meant roughly in English "Because."

That only made them more furious, but, surprisingly, I was never spanked. It was either they were so glad to have me back, or they thought there was something psychologically wrong with me and pitied me instead. I was a very good child, after all. I was very well behaved for someone growing up with two brothers and no sisters. Running away was the only deviant act I committed as a child.

Perhaps, growing up in a male dominated family was a contributing factor to my craving for excitement. I grew up under the wing of a very strict *yaya*, who was a frustrated nun. She would never allow me to play with my brothers and their playmates, much less step out of the house. I guess running away with my classmates was a way for me to see what the world was like outside, away from the stifling protection given to me.

The lure of the outside world stopped at first grade. The next four years, my mom gave birth to two girls. I became so preoccupied with the changes in our family and by the two bundles that popped out of nowhere (sex education came later) that I forgot all about going on another great adventure away from home. In the meantime, my family decided I was old enough to survive without a *yaya*.

My fourth attempt occurred when I was in the ninth grade. My parents would not allow me to go on a school trip to the next island, whereas my older brother was sent to Thailand and Singapore two years earlier. In rage, disgust and as a sign of protest, I walked out of my classes and spent the rest of the afternoon brooding in church. I know, it's the most unlikely place to run away to, but as I said, I have always been known as a good kid. So good, in fact, that my behavior worried my parents so much they allowed me to go.

I felt so guilt-stricken afterwards, I never made a show like that again. It's so hard when you are used to being a good kid, eh?

This doesn't mean, of course, that I never tried to run away again. I discovered later on that there were other, more sophisticated, legal ways of running away. So when my beliefs clashed with those of the school administration's during my senior year, I decided to turn my back on it forever by attending college in Metro Manila.

My years at the Ateneo thrilled me. For the first time in my life, there were no dress codes, no curfews, not even the hateful lining up before entering the classroom which I found totally degrading for high school students. I could now speak my mind, regardless of how weird my ideas were without having points deducted from my grades. I could actually complain about certain conditions on campus without being suspended for a week for having the gall to open my mouth.

In the Ateneo, I experienced a freedom that exhilarated and enlightened me at the same time. But I was never too keen on routine and stability. After four years, Manila became unbearable. With all the traffic and the pollution my asthma and pimples came back with a vengeance. The everyday rush to get somewhere, beat a deadline, catch something, took its toll on the *probinsyana* that I truly am. My unbending stand against working in a corporate environment made my future in Metro Manila look all the more uncertain, so, once again, for the nth time, I decided to run away from it all. And this time, I ran away by going home.

Ironically, the school that I had sworn to forsake for all eternity was my best employment opportunity. Perhaps it was the call of survival, or the temptation of getting a salary that equaled the rates in Metro Manila, or it could have been some strange idealism that I acquired from the Jesuits, but I jumped at the job offer. (Or was it the other way around? But that would be too vain.)

Unsurprisingly, after a year of teaching five subjects a semester, attending retreats and prayer sessions where the faculty's attendance was checked, all the reasons why I forsook that school came rushing back to me. I decided I had had enough. It was again time to move on.

I had the perfect excuse: graduate school in a foreign country. What could be better? I get to escape and see the sights, all at the same time.

I was further motivated by the fact that my family was demanding too much from me. My father had lost his job, went bankrupt and, perhaps taking his cue from me, ran off somewhere to escape his creditors. My older brother, the one whom privilege had looked down on all his life, dropped out of school and turned completely inutile. My mother, in the absence of anyone better, turned me into her resident psychiatrist. So, aside from being unhappy in my job, the task of supporting my family, financially and emotionally weighed more and more heavily on me.

I have never been an unquestioning believer in Filipino values. Our limitless tolerance and kindness tend to breed parasites, and that's what it did to my family. And I thought, and I still believe, that the best way to teach those able-bodied, irresponsible people who thought I was the anointed bread winner (despite the fact that I was younger than all of them) a lesson would be for the cash cow to leave them so that they would be forced to do something about their situation.

It took me more than a year to prepare for my latest expedition. In the process, I met the man that I learned to love like no other. And running away didn't look so easy anymore. But the process has been started, and inertia just carried me forward. And he loved me too much to ask me to stay.

I wonder, until when will I keep running? I am 23 years old. I cannot possibly do this all my life. I must settle down, some time.

Last night, while I was staring out into the rice fields of Japan, clutching the phone close to my ear, he asked me to marry him. He has done so, so many times, and I have always said yes. But somehow, some things have changed in the month that I've been here. I have realized how serious I am about him, and for a runaway, attachment is the worst thing that can happen. The word "marriage" plus the prospect of settling down, never to run away again, can send alarm bells ringing and make the runaway panic.

For the first time, I have realized that something is wrong with me. I have run away for adventure. I have run away because of conflict. And now, I live, regretfully, in a foreign country because I ran away from pressure and frustration. But I cannot—will not—run away from the man I want to grow old, have wrinkles and arthritis with. Because some things are worth hanging on to.

G.M., 23, is studying for an MA in international relations at the International University of Japan.

LETTERS

A cop-out of an economic summit

WE can be sure of one thing after Monday's economic summit: the Macapagal administration will stick to its economic strategy no matter what happens, believing that all we need in these times are a few quick fixes.

Presidential Spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said this much when he criticized non-participating civil society organizations for wanting to turn the summit into a forum for "ideological" issues. He explained that the summit was only meant to come up with short-term solutions to the economic crisis and not to discuss comprehensive approaches to the economy. In other words, we should all shut up about our petty concerns such as economic strategy and look no further than the next six months.

Well, sorry, but we civil-society types like to dwell on the bigger picture and are quite notorious for quibbling about details. Contrary to President Macapagal's and her spokesperson's explanations, we believe that an economic summit is also a proper venue for the government to reveal its vision for this country's economic survival in this time of crisis. Besides, our issues about macro-economic policy are more practical than ideological: an outward-oriented economy banking on foreign investments does not make sense in the context of a global recession. Since investments are hardly pouring, how can we build a stronger domestic economy? How can we cushion the impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable sectors of the economy? Quick fixes are fine for this is an emergency. But if the government remains inflexible about its economic framework, what use are these measures in the long run?

As for the short-term measures generated by the summit, some were only included after much protest by participating civil-society groups. These pertain to issues such as agrarian reform, labor and social security, etc. Apparently, the administration had to be persuaded to consider these issues as urgent and critical. We will see soon enough if the commitments made in these areas will be enforced.

Some crucial issues were still left out. There was no mention, for instance, of the coco levy—an issue that affects millions of impoverished farmers in the declining coconut industry. The whole discussion on preserving workers' right to self-organization was avoided. The question of reviewing regulatory processes for privatized public utilities such as water and power was likewise ignored, at a time when water and electricity rates are about to be raised again. The whole process was in fact marked by the government's avoidance of crucial, contentious issues such as these.—**JOEL ROCAMORA, president, Akbayan Citizen's Action Party, 14 Mapagkumbaba St., Sikatuna Village, Quezon City**

SM denies story on indignities on sales ladies

THIS is in line with the article "Sales ladies asked to show legs at work, according to study," which appeared in your Metro section last Dec. 10, 2001.

The scenarios mentioned in Gerald G. Lacuarta's article, which we understand, was based on a study by the Center of Women's Resources, may make good copy, but they are simply not practiced in our company.

With regard to our hiring policies, we select our staff on the basis of their qualifications and performance and certainly do not subject them to the indignities mentioned in the article. More so, as our personnel department is composed mostly of female staffers.

Likewise, while we implement security measures like all other retailers do, it is our policy to maintain a high degree of professionalism in carrying these out through lady guards.

It is unfortunate that our company should be projected by the study in this light. We take pride in the professionalism of our women staffers, who comprise a majority of our employees. Many of our executives, in fact, are women who can best understand the concerns of women in the workplace, and certainly would not subject them to the indignities mentioned.—**CHELO C. MONASTERIO, senior assistant vice president for operations, Shoemart Department Store**

Cheaper cataract removal for retirees?

I AM writing in behalf of other retirees who like me are confined within the four walls of our rooms because of visual disability.

I have retired from active employment for many years now but my visual disability keeps me from enjoying my twilight years and restricts me to my own house or to the immediate surroundings of my residence. Occasionally when assistance is available, I venture outside and enjoy the scenery again.

Lately my doctor recommended operation for my cataract, which if successful will allow me to move about and liberate me from the restrictions I now live with. I am still entitled to Medicare benefits which can underwrite the expenses for my operation. But my doctor wants to do my operation in the hospital. This would require the deposit of some amount for the intraocular lens and to defray other expenses not covered by Medicare.

Recently a friend and fellow retiree had her cataract operated on at an ambulatory surgery center for cataracts in the city on purely Medicare coverage. I was also informed that many doctors now are discouraging operations in ambulatory centers because they will receive more from the PHIC if they confine their patients and do the operation in the hospital. I would like to inquire if it this is true.

For me and other retirees who subsist on our meager pensions, it would be a big burden to pay more than what can be covered by Medicare. The PHIC ought to help us retirees by encouraging the doctors to perform their operations at the ambulatory surgery center for we cannot afford to shell out extra money if we are confined and operated in the hospital.—**LUIS ARRIETA, Luzviminda Village, Maa, Davao City 8000**

Charges against Zambo trader explained

IN A SERIES of columns on Le Peng Wee, the last of which were published on Nov. 29 and Dec. 8, 2001, Ramon Tulfo has been vouching for the innocence of Wee and making it appear that I am harassing him in behalf of the Lobregats. Allow me to make the following clarifications:

First, when I filed charges against Wee, I was simply doing my official duties as collector for the Port of Zamboanga. I took over the post on Sept. 7, 2000 or after the crime charged had been committed on June 30, 2000. Wee, despite the fact that he finished only Grade 4, was appointed by then President Joseph Estrada as presidential consultant for Mindanao economic affairs because he allegedly provided Erap with booze and women and served as his gambling companion. Until I assumed my post, Wee would have gone scot-free because of his connections in the Bureau of Customs, which is the reason I included in the char-ges the former deputy collector, Corazon Motomal, a *kumare* and ballroom dancing companion of Araceli Wee, wife of Le Peng Wee. Motomal herself brags that she got her position with the help of Wee.

Second, regional director Maximo Dichoso of the Department of Energy and Natural Resources has also filed a case against Wee for violation of Republic Act 6969.

Third, the Lobregats have nothing to do with the filing of the case which, I repeat, is only part of our function of implementing the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines and bringing violators to court. Personally, I cannot see how or why the Lobregats would harass Wee who was roundly trounced in his last elections when he ran against Maria Clara Lobregat for Zamboanga mayor. He ended last in a field of four, and harassing someone who had been rejected by the electorate would be a waste of time and energy.

Fourth, the original investigating prosecutor who conducted the hearing suddenly inhibited himself and state prosecutor Misael Ladaga who replaced him is obviously not knowledgeable about customs law. He erroneously applied the rules on evidence and gave credence to inadmissible unauthenticated documents.

Moreover, he resolved the case despite the fact that I had not been furnished copies of the counter-affidavits of respondents Motomal and Federico Rodriguez. Ladaga dismissed the charges against Motomal and made no mention at all of Rodriguez.

By the time this letter sees print, we would have filed our motion for reconsideration on those grounds, principal of which is that Tan Ngee Foo or Tony Tan who earlier claimed ownership of the seized goods and has pointed to Wee as the real owner of the contraband and has also pointed to Motomal as the person who accepted the bribe and arranged the illegal release of the shipment. Tan's application for admission to the witness protection program has been approved by Justice Secretary Hernando Perez.

Incidentally we are curious as to how many reasons Wee gave the investigating prosecutor. The questioned resolution appears to be a "cut and paste" reproduction of Wee's pleading.

The contested joint resolution of Ladaga and Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño exonerating Wee was dated Nov. 27, 2001 and marked received by the DOJ mailing station on Nov. 28, 2001. Tulfo in his column of Nov. 29 wrote: "Businessmen Le Peng Wee heaved a sigh of relief yesterday when he received a DOJ decision dismissing two criminal complaints against him." If yesterday meant Nov. 28, Wee got his copy of the resolution on the same day it was received by the mailing section. That is really super *bilis* mail. If yesterday was Nov. 27, meaning the day before Tulfo presumably wrote that column on Nov. 28, then Wee got his copy even before it could be mailed to him. To borrow the words of Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon, that is "really wow!"

The envelope containing my copy of the resolution was stamped received by the receiving section of the Central Post Office, Manila on Nov. 29, 2001. It was received by my office on Dec. 4, 2001.—**LOURDES MANGAOANG, district collector, Port of Zamboanga, Bureau of Customs**

Not an official PCGG statement

THANK you for the correction of the misattribution to me of certain statements in connection with your report on the coco-levy case of Dec. 4, 2001.

I wish, however, to make a final clarification. The supposed Presidential Commission on Good Government statement of Dec. 2, 2001 was not a commission statement. There were no consultations with, advice to or clearance from me or the majority of the commissioners on the statement or the issuance of the same.

Dec. 2, 2001 was a Sunday and there was no one in the office. This should have cautioned your reporter to verify the character of the "statement" with me or the commissioners. **—HAYDEE B. YORAC, chair, Presidential Commission on Good Government, Philcomcen Bldg., Ortigas corner ADB Avenue, Pasig City**

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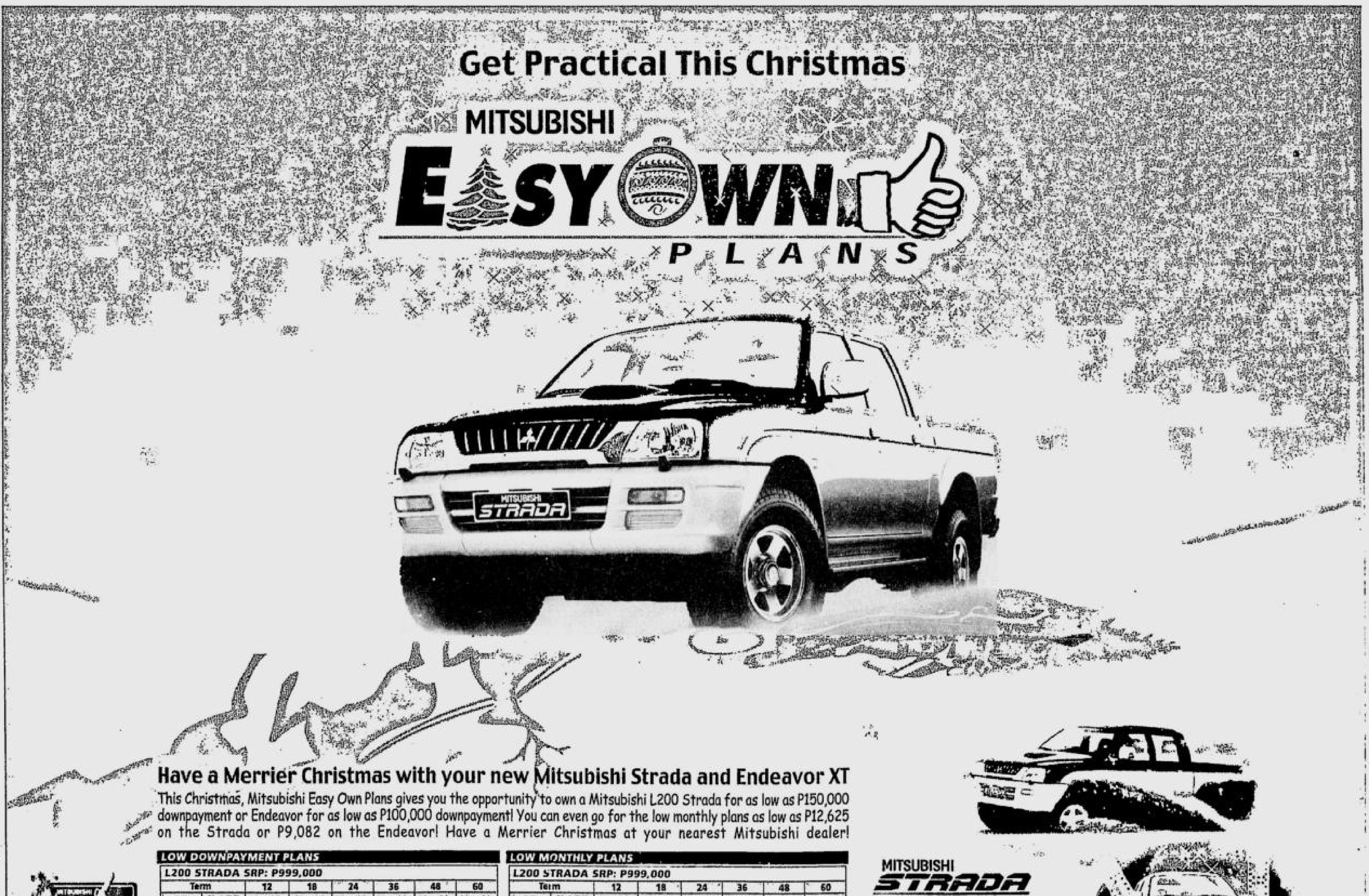

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The WORLD
LUVERNE B. GUECO, EDITOR

Israel-Arafat break alarms world

NICOSIA—Israel's decision to stop doing business with Yasser Arafat sparked alarm in the Arab world and beyond Thursday, with the United States saying it will stick with the Palestinian leader, and a UN official warning the two sides are nearer than ever to "a full military confrontation."

The government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon cut all ties with "irrelevant" Arafat after a bus ambush in the West Bank killed 10 Jewish settlers, and vowed to send whatever force it takes into the Palestinian territories to track down the militants he has failed to imprison.

Nonetheless, US Secretary of State Colin Powell reiterated that Washington still believed Arafat could represent the Palestinians.

"Yasser Arafat is the elected head of the Palestinian Authority and reflects the leadership that the Palestinians wish to have," he said.

"He still has that authority, that mantle of leadership given to him by the Palestinian people and we will continue to work with him."

That said, Powell and others demanded that Arafat show his leadership by taking immediate steps to end weeks of deadly violence.

The United States "believes that it is incumbent on Chairman Arafat to demonstrate in actions and deeds, and not just words, that he will bring the killers to justice," White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer said.

Powell echoed those remarks, saying: "Arafat has a choice to make. He's got to go after these organizations who are ignoring the possibility of peace."

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan urged Arafat to take "decisive" action against those who perpetrate anti-Israeli crimes, a UN spokesperson said.

The Nobel prize-winner also reminded Israeli leaders that a solid, lasting peace could be obtained only by sound negotiations to end the conflict with the Palestinians.

Meanwhile, Britain's foreign office dismissed the Israeli government's measures against Arafat.

"He is the key Palestinian leader with whom Israel is likely to be able to negotiate a peace when the time is right," a foreign office spokesperson said.

In the Middle East, Arab League Secretary General Amr Mussa called for a meeting of the UN Security Council as soon as possible to try to find a way to restore peace in the Middle East.

Mussa said that, after telephone contacts with Arafat and a majority of Arab foreign ministers, agreement had been reached "to seek the convening as soon as possible of a meeting of the UN Security Council."

Arab ambassadors at UN headquarters in New York proceeded to call for such a meeting.

Mussa also announced that the League's follow-up committee on the Palestinian uprising would meet on Jan. 4 and 5 in Cairo.

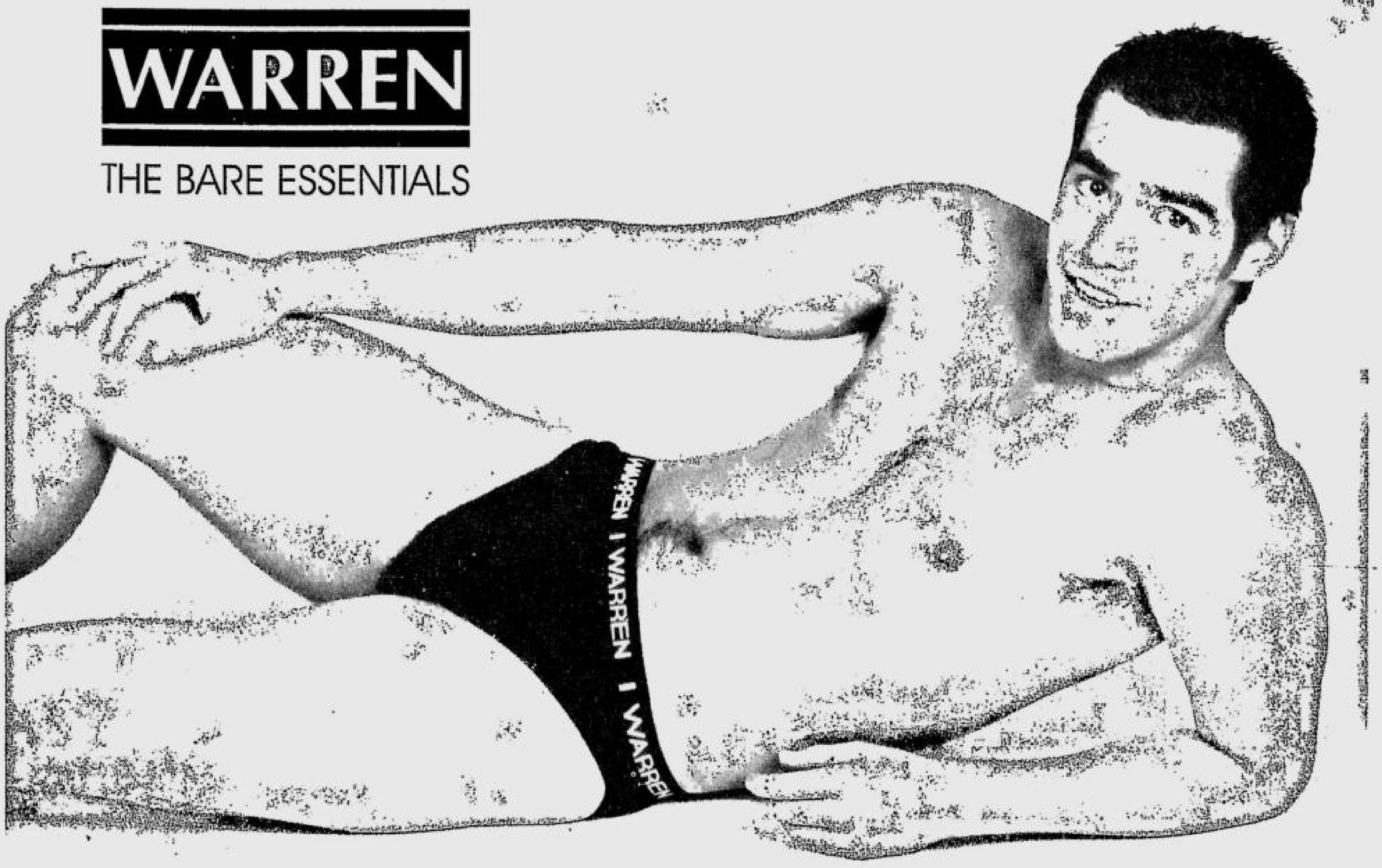
"The United States must decide on the ways to save their peace efforts, if they have the will," Mussa added.

In Amman, Jordanian Foreign Minister Abdel Ilah Khatib said a UN meeting should "examine the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people, ways of stopping it and ensuring international protection."

The UN special envoy to the Middle East, Terje Roed-Larsen, told CNN television: "I think we are close as we've ever been to a full military confrontation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority."

"Undoubtedly if that happens this will either, in the best case, weaken the institutions of the Palestinian Authority so much that there will be very little central authority, or the Palestinian Authority will be completely crushed," he warned.

"In both instances there will be a situation of chaos which will last for a very long time, and that will produce an even more difficult security situation," he added. *AFP*



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Pope fasting for peace

VATICAN CITY—Pope John Paul II was fasting and praying Friday for peace and understanding in a time of war and strife.

The Pontiff chose the end of the Muslim period of Ramadan for the fast, saying he hoped it would help build "comprehension between Christians and Muslims, called more than ever, in the current era, to be constructors of justice and peace together."

John Paul had invited Catholics "as well as from faithful from other religions, in particular Jews and Muslims, as well as so many persons of good will" to join him.

Many churches in Italy answered the call, scheduling prayer vigils and other ceremonies and taking up collections. Several politicians also said they'd joint the fast.

John Paul had urged people to donate whatever they would have spent on food Friday to the victims of war and terrorism.

The Vatican scheduled no special ceremony, saying the Pope would fast privately while going about his regular business. "He's very discreet," observed the Vatican spokesperson, Joaquin Navarro-Valls.

According to some reports the frail Pontiff, who is 81, might take some soup or tea at midday to keep up his strength.

In encouraging people to join him in the fast, John Paul has said the times require a penitential act.

"Humanity is called upon to mobilize its best energies, so that love prevails over hate, peace over war, truth over lies, pardon over vendetta," he said a few days ago.

In another sign of concern, John Paul has invited representatives of the world's religions to come to Assisi, Italy, on Jan. 24 for a daylong prayer for peace.

Assisi, a pilgrimage hilltown in central Italy, is the birthplace of St. Francis, the founder of the Roman Catholic Franciscan order. *AP*

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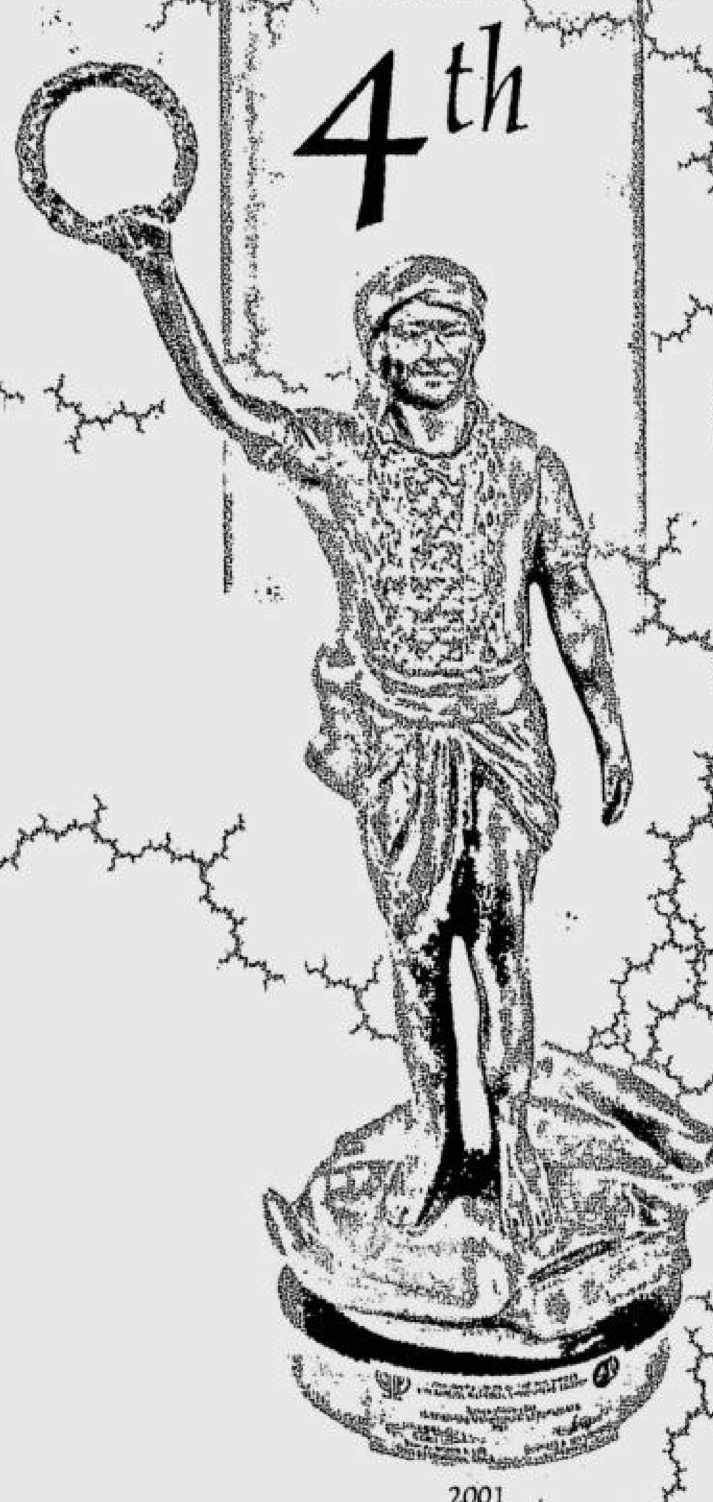

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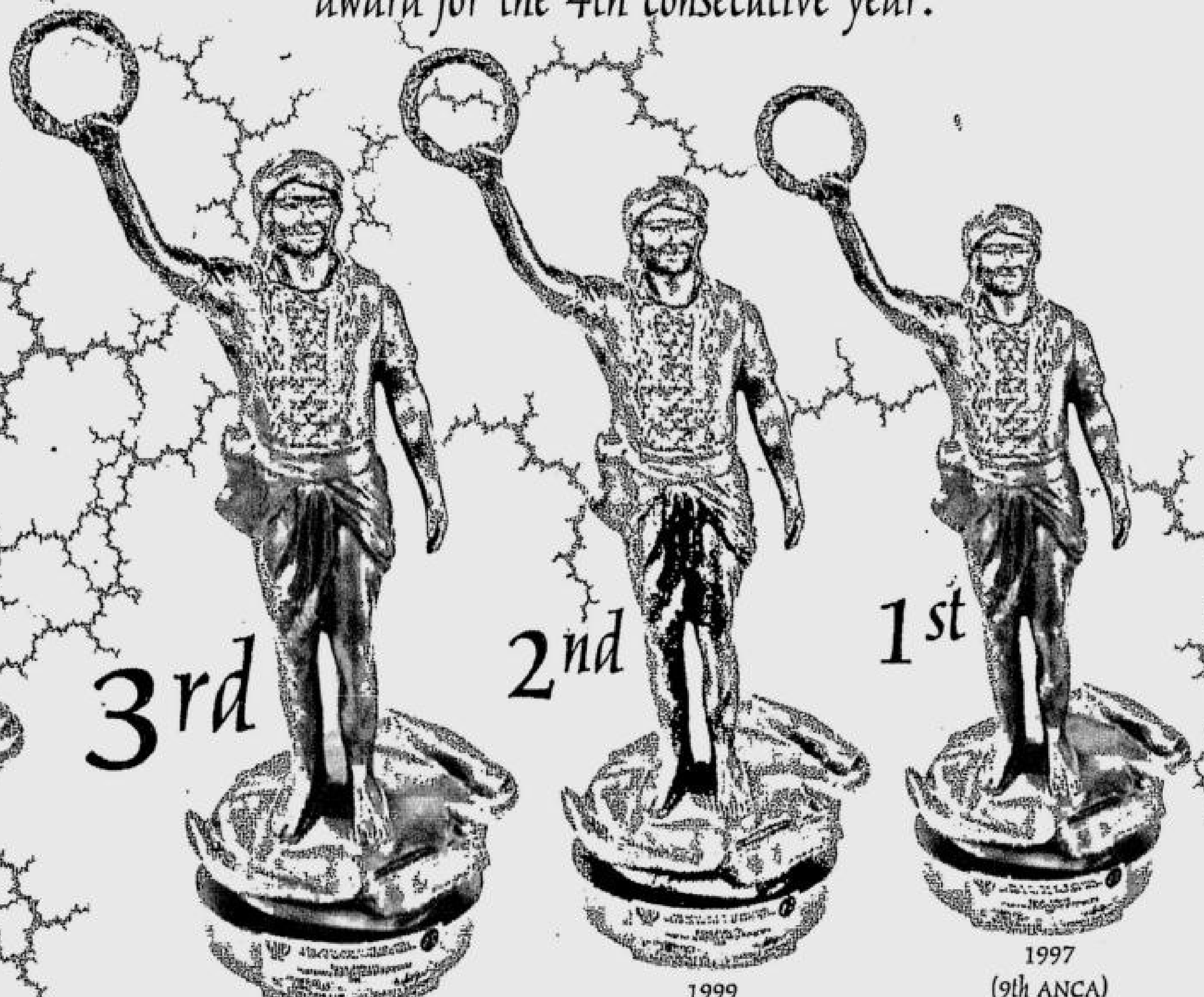

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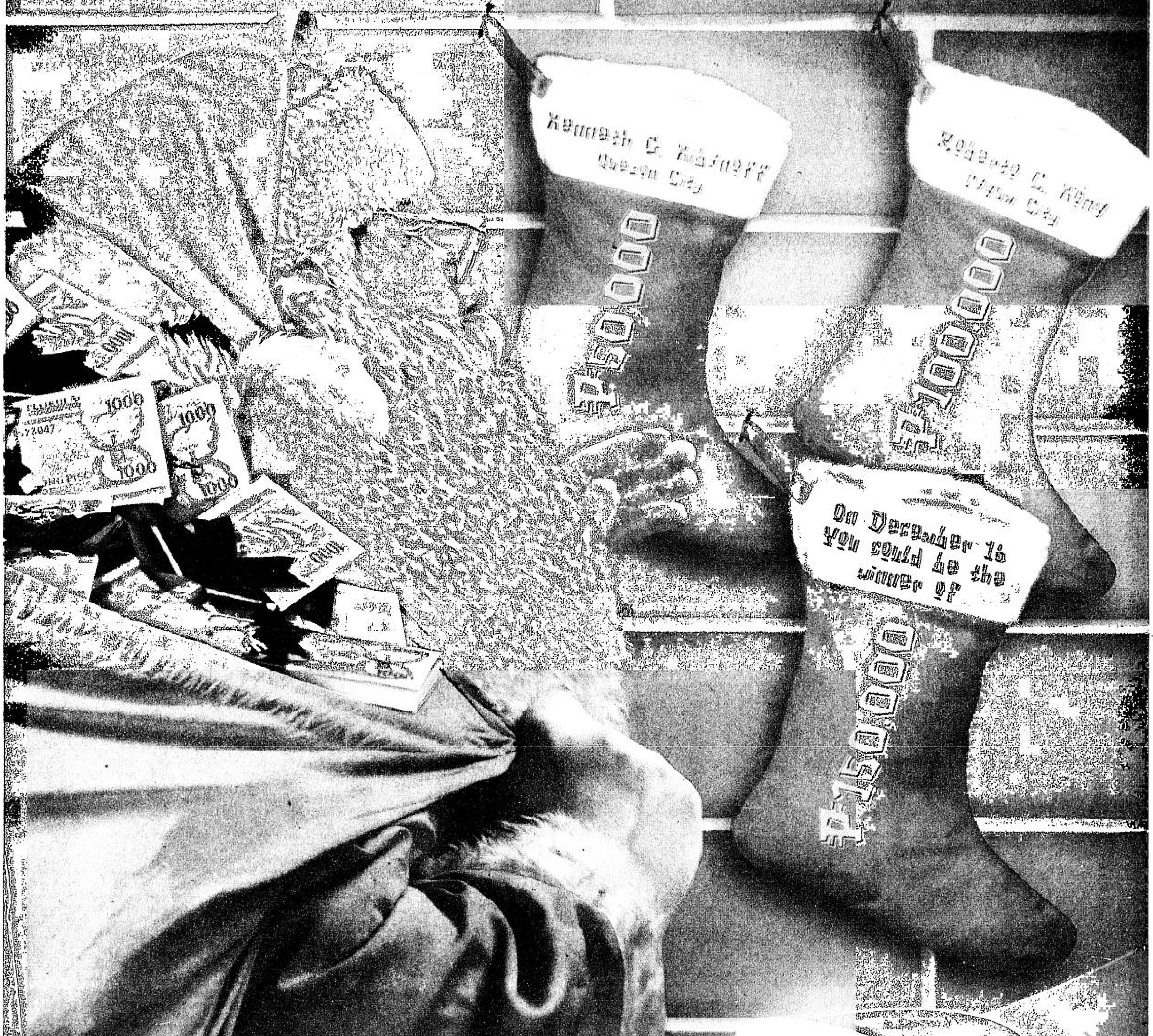
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GLOBAL OUTRAGE

India weighs response to suicide attack

NEW DELHI—India's minister in charge of parliament yesterday said Pakistan-based militants could have carried out a bloody suicide attack on the seat of power in the world's largest democracy.

But Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pramod Mahajan, interviewed by Star News, stressed it was too early to say who was behind Thursday's attack on the parliament complex, in which 12 people, including the assailants, were killed.

Asked if Pakistan-based groups were responsible, Mahajan replied:

"Maybe. All of us know that terrorism in this country has been sponsored by our neighbor." But he immediately qualified this by adding: "This is not a point to make now, it's guesswork at this stage."

The attack on parliament was unprecedented. The five attackers, one of them a suicide bomber, and seven other people, mainly security guards, died in the ensuing battle.

Security remained tight around parliament and other key government buildings on Friday. Security forces worked through the night to clear the parliament and ensure there were no bombs ahead of its opening at 11:00 a.m. (1:30 p.m. in Manila).

"We have some clues which the police have got. They are investigating," Mahajan said.

He said Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee may make a statement to parliament on the attack when proceedings resume.

Mahajan welcomed Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's condemnation of the attack, but pointed out that he had not joined other world leaders in calling the attackers terrorists.

"When everybody from George Bush to Putin to Tony Blair used the word terrorist, Musharraf used the word armed intruders," Mahajan added.

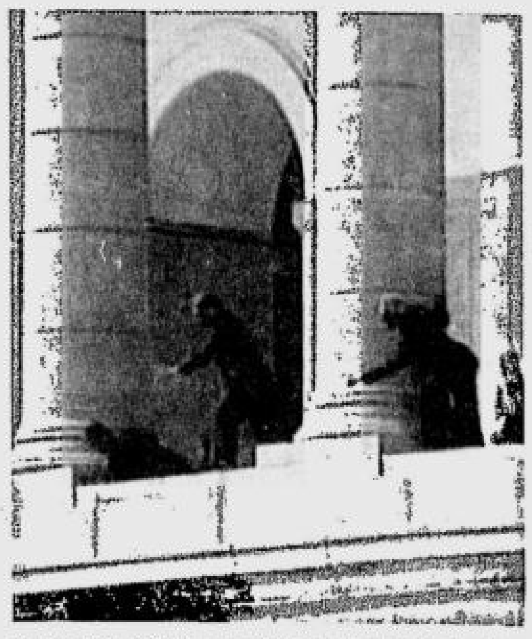
No-one has claimed responsibility for the attack, nor has the government so far blamed any group.

But analysts say the operation had all the hallmarks of some of the militant groups operating in Jammu and Kashmir state in the north, where 38 people died in a suicide bomb attack on the state assembly two months ago.

Then, under heavy pressure from Western powers to show restraint, India held back from striking at Pakistan-based Islamic militants it blames for a 12-year revolt against Indian rule in Kashmir, its only Muslim-majority state.

But analysts and diplomats then widely held the view that come the next big attack, India would have to strike back.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee vowed on Thursday to strike back to crush terrorism and its backers.



INDIANS point to a suspected armed attacker inside the parliament compound in New Delhi Dec. 13. REUTERS

The government's tough verbal stance could make it hard for Vajpayee to do nothing if it turned out that Kashmiri separatists were indeed behind the parliament attack.

But striking back could mean crossing the Line of Control, which divides disputed Kashmir and is dubbed one of the most dangerous places in the world after Pakistan and India tested nuclear devices in 1998.

Musharraf, who gave up much of Pakistan's influence over Afghanistan when he abandoned support for the then ruling Taliban and signed up to the US war on terrorism, would face intense domestic pressure to respond to any Indian intrusion.

Thursday's attack sparked global outrage and condemnation.

Indian newspapers on Friday expressed shock and anger.

"Heart Attack," blared the Asian Age, which said the attackers had turned parliament into a "house of terror."

In a front-page editorial, the Hindu newspaper said, "The bloody siege of parliament represents an attack on the citadel or the very symbol of democracy."

Reuters

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Russia, China hit US pullout from ABM pact

PARIS—The US decision to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty Thursday drew mixed reactions, with Russian President Vladimir Putin describing the move as a "mistake."

US President George W. Bush said he had given Moscow the required six months notice to withdraw from the 1972 treaty, the cornerstone of Cold War arms control efforts, to allow the United States to build a missile shield.

"Both Russia and the United States, compared with other nuclear powers, have for a long time had an effective system for penetrating anti-missile defenses," Putin said in an address to the nation.

"That is why I can say with complete certainty that the decision taken by the American president is not a threat to the security of the Russian Federation.

"We are not surprised by this decision which we nevertheless consider to be a mistake," Putin said, adding that "Russia was not preparing to withdraw jointly from the ABM treaty as proposed by the Americans."

In Beijing, Chinese President Jiang Zemin called for multilateral efforts to ensure global stability following the US decision to abandon the treaty and press ahead with a missile defense system.

"China is willing to work with other countries to make efforts to safeguard world peace and stability," Jiang, quoted by state media on Friday, said in Burma, where he was on a state visit.

"Under the current situation, it is very important to safeguard the international arms control and disarmament system," Jiang added after telephone conversations with Bush and Putin.

China's foreign ministry called on Thursday for talks between "relevant sides" in pursuit of "a solution that safeguards the global strategic balance and doesn't harm international efforts at arms control and disarmament."

Neither Jiang nor the foreign ministry spelled out what China had in mind after Bush gave six-months notice of withdrawing from the ABM Treaty, which Beijing regarded as a cornerstone of the global strategic balance.

But Chinese analysts said it appeared Beijing, which fears scrapping the treaty will spark a new arms race, wanted the world's key nuclear powers—the United States, Russia, China and possibly France and Britain—to meet on the issue.

Bush's long expected move also drew criticism from the US Congress, where the US Senate's Majority Leader, Democrat Tom Daschle, said he was "concerned" about US allies' reaction to the announcement. *AFP and Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

Chernobyl plant still threatens Ukraine

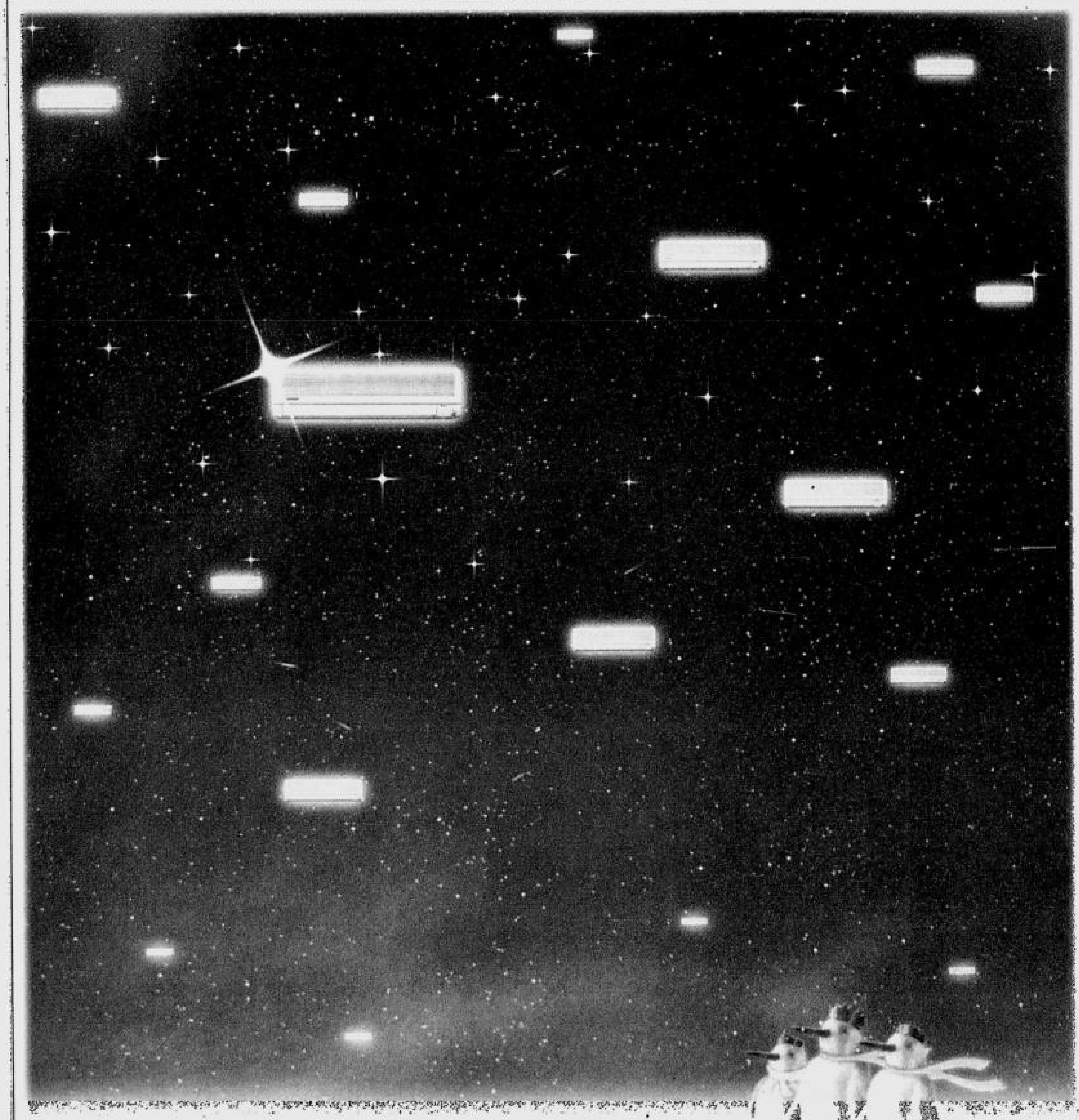
KIEV—Ukraine marks the first anniversary Saturday of the Chernobyl nuclear plant's final shutdown on Dec. 15, 2000, in the somber knowledge that a radioactive menace still looms over the scene of the world's worst ever nuclear accident. It was just a year ago that Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma personally flicked a switch that shut down the last of Chernobyl's four reactors that was still running. But in the run-up to Saturday's anniversary, Kuchma warned the international community not to imagine that the nuclear threat which caused one of the other reactors to explode on April 26, 1986, contaminating most of Europe, had altogether receded. "The work has only just begun" to resolve the problems linked to Chernobyl, Kuchma said Wednesday after a brief visit to the area. An estimated 15,000 to 30,000 people have died as a result of the 1986 explosion that contaminated three quarters of Europe, spewing radiation into the atmosphere equivalent to 500 times that of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima 41 years earlier. *AFP*

Tommy unlikely to be jailed forthwith

JAKARTA—Indonesian police said Friday that Tommy Suharto, the son of the former president, would not be transferred from police detention to prison any time soon despite a Supreme Court order that he be jailed immediately. Police still have to question Tommy in relation to accusations that he was behind the murder of a judge and two other offences, said Jakarta police deputy spokesperson, Commissioner Alex Mandalika. "We will not be affected by the Supreme Court's letter and . . . we have established coordination with the prosecutor's office that we will continue the questioning," said Mandalika. On Thursday, Supreme Court chief Bagir Manan, in a legal opinion for the attorney general, said Hutomo "Tommy" Mandala Putra must still serve 11 months in jail even though a ruling quashing his original 18-month sentence was issued in October while he was a fugitive. *AFP*

Embattled S. Korean minister quits

SEOUL—South Korea's Deputy Justice Minister Shin Kwang-ok resigned Friday amid allegations of his involvement in a growing bribery scandal. "I wrote a letter of resignation and submitted it (to Justice Minister Choi Kyung-won) as it would be awkward to be investigated as an incumbent deputy justice minister," Shin told journalists. President Kim Dae-jung accepted his resignation, the presidential Blue House said. Shin decided to resign to free himself from an awkward position where he would be questioned by his subordinate prosecutors as all prosecutors in South Korea are under the command of the justice ministry. Shin has been engulfed in a widening lobbying scandal involving the failed upstart business leader, Jin Seung-hyun. *AFP*



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TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor

Cops tighten security for Abu leader transfer

DAVAO CITY—Police have tightened security in Davao del Norte in connection with the transfer of Abu Sayyaf leader Nadzmie Saabdulla to Metro Manila.

Supt. Akmad Mamalinta, deputy police regional director, said more lawmen wére deployed in Tagum City to thwart plans by the bandit group to rescue their leader.

Saabdulla, widely known as Commander Global, is being kept at the Davao del Norte provincial jail since his arrest in General Santos City in July for his role in the May 22 attack on the Barcelo Pearl Farm Resort on Samal Island.

At least three people died in that attack, which police said was a botched attempt on the part of Global's group to kidnap resort visitors.

Mamalinta said the Abu Sayyaf could already be hatching plans how to rescue Global, 39, reportedly the bandit group's chief of staff.

"We received such reports and we are looking into it," Mamalinta said.

The Supreme Court has recently approved Global's transfer to Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan, in Taguig, Metro Manila, along with four other suspected Abu Sayyaf members.

During the day of the transfer itself, which the police said depends on further orders, members of the police's special action force would escort the Abu Sayyaf leader.

Tagum City Mayor Gelacio Gementiza said the bandit leader's transfer to Manila would diffuse the tension that has gripped residents for several months now.

"Our people could sleep well at night again. We fear that his continued detention here could lead to violence as his companions might sow terror in an effort to free him from jail," Gementiza said.

Global served as the Abu Sayyaf's spokesperson during the kidnapping of 21 hostages, including Europeans, South Africans, and several Filipinos, from Sipadan, Malaysia, last year.

In Zamboanga City, more than a dozen US soldiers arrived on the eve of the military's self-imposed deadline to rescue an American couple and a Filipino nurse being held by the Abu Sayyaf.

It was not immediately clear whether the group was from the 19-member unit that visited Zamboanga last week preparing to expand a training regime for local special forces unit to fight the Abu Sayyaf.

Lt. Col. Danilo Servando, spokesperson for the military's Southern Command, said some of the group belong to the US Special Operations Command based in Hawaii.

"I don't know how sensitive their mission here is and we cannot say what their purpose is," he said.

Earlier this week, Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu set a deadline of "before Dec. 16" for the rescue of missionary couple Martin and Gracia Burnham of Wichita, Kansas, and Deborah Yap of Basilan.

"This is an inspirational goal for our soldiers," Cimatu said.

Brig. Gen. Glicerio Sua, regional Army commander, said troops have identified the area where the kidnappers are holding their captives.

"The situation is fluid," Sua said when asked if his troops could meet the deadline. "Most of the time we find ourselves fighting nature instead of the enemies themselves."

He said troops have to deal with the cold rainy nights in the jungles of Basilan and its thick vegetation.

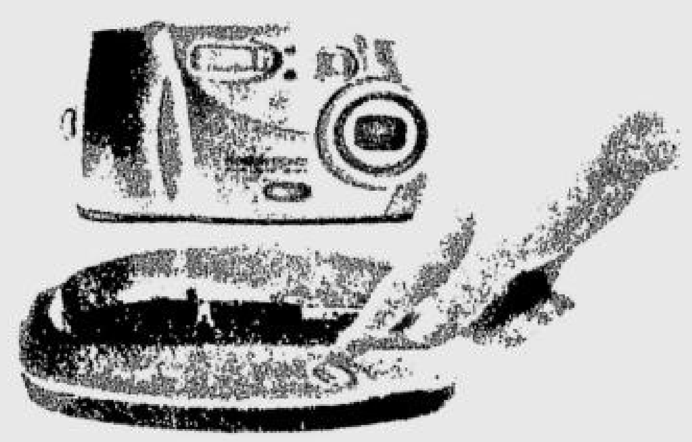
"This is also a game of hide-and-seek. It is more difficult to seek than to hide," he said.

Sua said his troops are prepared to continue the rescue operation if they do not meet the deadline.

"Even during Christmas our operations will continue," he said.

Sua said the three hostages are being held together and guarded by about 40 to 50 Abu Sayyaf gunmen led by Abu Sabaya, who is also the group's spokesperson.

Members of the first special forces unit called Light Reaction Company trained by US experts have engaged Abu Sayyaf gunmen, including a clash last week in which they killed 11 guerrillas and captured one. Two soldiers were wounded then. ***Dennis Jay Santos and Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau with a report from AP***



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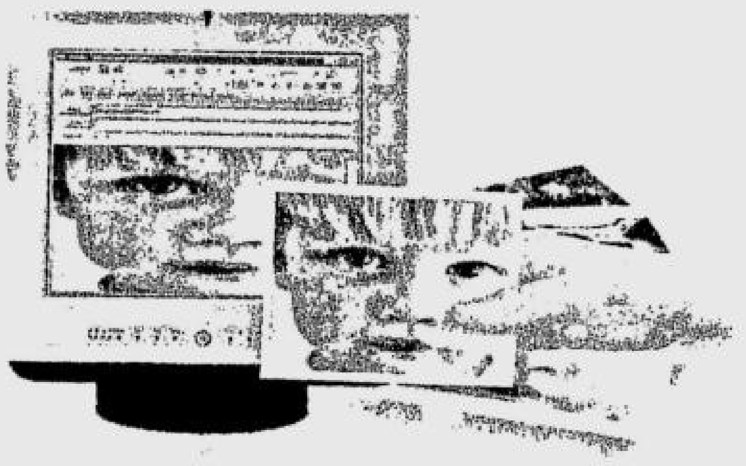

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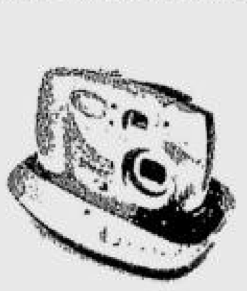

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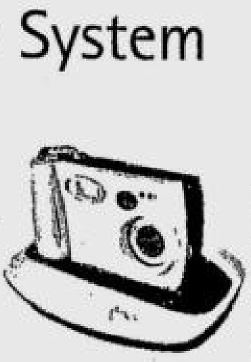

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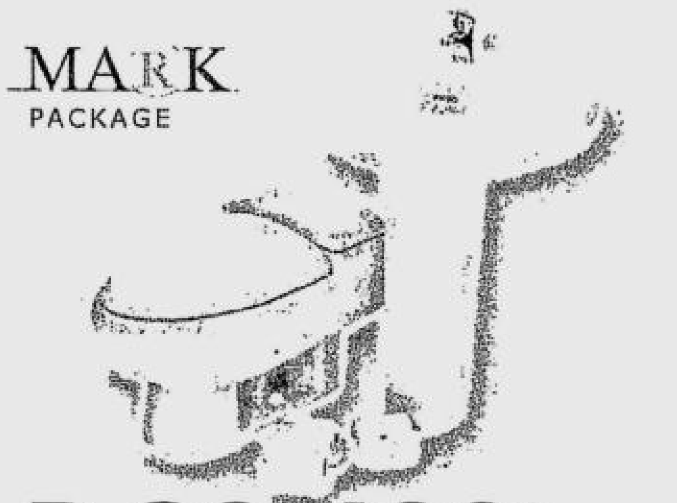

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JAVIER MURDER CASE

Inspection of Pacificador house sought

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

SAN JOSE, Antique—The accused in the Evelio Javier murder case have asked presiding Judge Rudy Castrojas of the Regional Trial Court in Antique to conduct an ocular inspection on the two houses of former Antique Assemblyman Arturo Pacificador.

Accused Avelino Javellana, who acted as defense lawyer, made a verbal motion yesterday after conducting a recross-examination on accused-turned-state witness Arleen Limoso.

He said the ocular inspection was necessary to confirm the testimony of Limoso.

Judge Castrojas then ordered Javellana in open court to submit a written motion on his request for an ocular inspection of the two houses. The motion should be submitted not later than Dec. 19, the court said.

The court also ordered State Prosecutor Leo Dacera III, head of the prosecution panel, to submit the prosecution's opposition to Javellana's motion on Jan. 2, 2002.

Javellana told the Inquirer that the ocular inspection would show that Limoso "was lying."

He and co-accused Pacificador said Limoso's description of the houses in the Sitio Taringtaring compound were "erroneous and all lies."

But Dacera said the ocular inspection of the two houses was not needed because both places were "not the scene of the crime."

He told the Inquirer that an inspection now "serves no practical purpose" because Limoso testified "on the conditions of the two houses 15 years ago which may no longer be the same today."

Limoso had testified that Javellana went inside Pacificador's rest house in Sitio Taringtaring, Barangay Dalipe in San Jose town with co-accused Eduardo "Boy Muslim" Iran. Javellana and Iran allegedly stayed in the rest house from 8-11 p.m. on Feb. 10, 1986, the eve of Javier's killing.

Limoso said he saw Javellana again a few hours after Javier's killing with Pacificador's son, Rodolfo, in Pacificador's house in Barangay Lapaz in Hamtic town where Iran and his group went after Javier's killing. Limoso said he saw Javellana give a thumbs-up sign to Iran.

Iran was tagged the leader of the armed group that killed Javier and wounded four others in a daylight attack at the San Jose town public plaza on Feb. 10, 1986.

Iran's whereabouts remain unknown even as unconfirmed reports said he was killed in Malaysia last year.

Yesterday, the prosecution panel was supposed to rest its case after conducting a redirect examination of Limoso.

But Castrojas ordered the deferment of the formal offer of exhibits by the prosecution until the motion of the accused for an ocular inspection was resolved.

Aside from Javellana, Iran and the Pacificadors, 14 others, mostly former members of the defunct Philippine Constabulary, are facing murder, frustrated murder and attempted murder charges in connection with Javier's killing.

Pacificador, a close ally of then President Ferdinand Marcos, was identified as the alleged mastermind of the Javier killing.

Puerto Princesa gov't faces default on treasury bills

Ruelle Albert D. Castro
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—The city government is finding difficulty in paying the outstanding balance of its treasury bills floated by the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. sometime before the May elections.

As a result, the RCBC has threatened to declare the local government unit in default if it does not settle its obligation that matured on Nov. 24.

City administrator Jocelyn Dilig quoted the bank as saying in its letter that defaulting would result in the commitment of a portion of the city's internal revenue allotment as payment since it was used as collateral in the transaction.

This could worsen the city government's financial condition, Dilig said.

Since the assumption of the new administration, the city government has been in tight financial situation due to a budget deficit estimated to reach P200 million at yearend.

The inclusion of the city's financial obligation to the RCBC has already delayed the delivery of other services and the implementation of some important projects, among them the sanitary landfill project.

The previous city administration entered into a contract with the RCBC to float the P320-million Green Bonds to finance the construction of a socialized housing project in Barangay Mangingisda.

The city government, however, failed to supplement its P45-million sinking fund for some time, resulting in its technical default with the bank.

The housing project has remained unfinished while the fund from the proceeds of the bond flotation is now in near depletion, city officials said.

City officials led by Dilig met recently with representatives of the agencies concerned with the contract in Manila to resolve the problem.

Dilig declined to divulge the result of their negotiations until she meets with City Mayor Dennis Socrates.

In an interview earlier, Socrates said they are studying three options to meet the city's obligation. These are payment restructuring, buy-out scheme and going to court.

Payment restructuring would mean the extension of the payment to a longer period to accommodate and ease the city's financial burden. The buy-out scheme will look for entities that would assume the city's burden of paying its RCBC obligation and give the city much easier payment terms.

The legal option would mean filing a civil suit questioning the validity of the whole contract. This is the last option being considered by the city government.

Socrates expressed optimism that these options would solve the problem though he expressed hope they would never reach the legal option.

He also expressed optimism over the cooperation extended by agencies concerned to help them solve their problem.

Dilig said they have already talked with the RCBC for a restructured payment but the latter denied the proposal, saying the only way to restructure the payments is to declare a state of default.

"Only then (can) you negotiate for payment restructuring," the city administrator quoted the RCBC as saying.

She added they are already looking for potential buyers but no one seems to be interested in the scheme, leaving the final option of a legal case.

Dilig, however, could not say whether or not they are preparing to file a case.

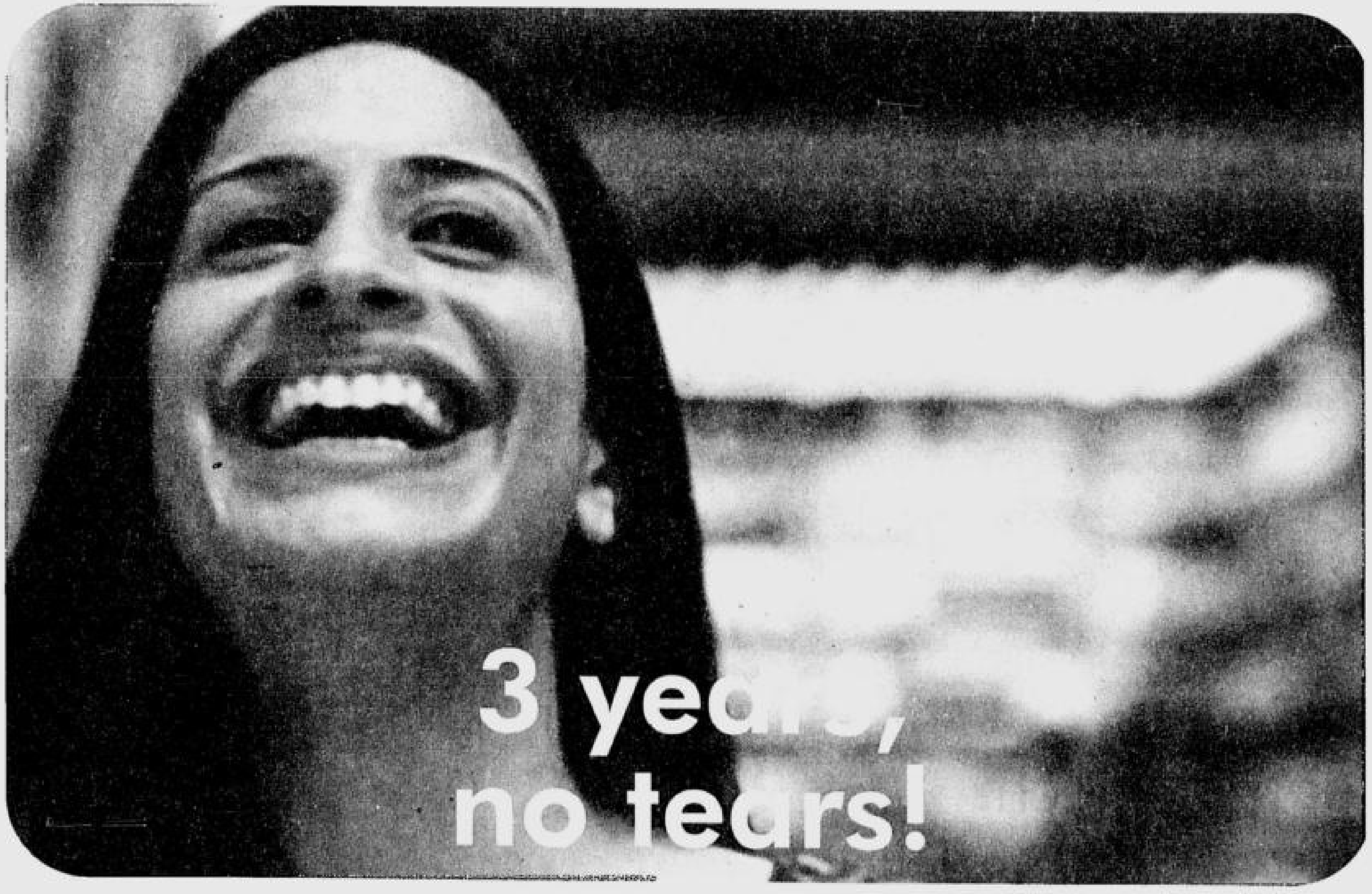
She admitted that something was wrong with the contract.

The city official said even the socialized housing project's feasibility studies have flaws. For one, the prices of the lots in the area appeared to be overstated.

"The lots also don't have titles, making it impossible to sell the properties to home financing agencies," Dilig added.

She cited the project's inability to be self-liquidating, contrary to its conceptualized purpose.

Dilig said they are reviewing the project beneficiaries to find out if they can pay since these are poor fishermen evicted from their occupied lands in the city.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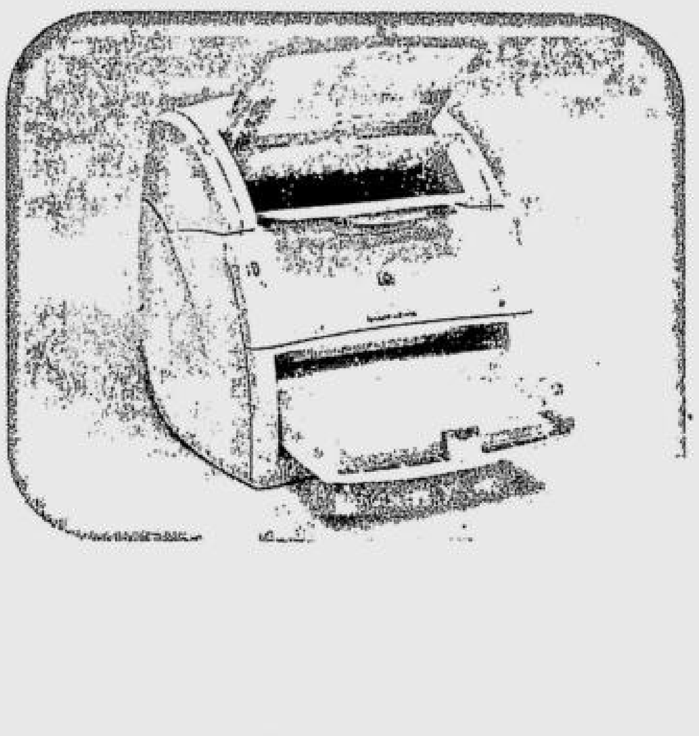

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern and Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy with Rains	HI 30° Lo 22°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	HI 24° Lo 13°
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy with Rains	HI 30° Lo 18°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	HI 33° Lo 23°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	HI 31° Lo 21°
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	HI 29° Lo 19°
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	HI 30° Lo 25°
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	HI 31° Lo 24°
Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains	HI 28° Lo 23°
Roxas	Cloudy with Rains	HI 30° Lo 25°
Cebu	Cloudy with Rains	HI 30° Lo 24°
Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains	HI 28° Lo 24°
Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains	HI 32° Lo 24°
Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains	HI 30° Lo 24°
Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains	HI 30° Lo 23°
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	HI 30° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Loyesa, PDI Research/12/15/01

ROUNDUP

Indonesians nab Pinoys

DAVAO CITY—Indonesian authorities have arrested at least 49 fishers mostly from General Santos City since last month for alleged poaching, the foreign affairs office here said Thursday. Foreign affairs assistant secretary Bahnarim Guinomla said those arrested were already repatriated after they were turned over to the Philippine Embassy in Manado, Indonesia. Guinomla said most of fishers have unintentionally intruded into Indonesian waters, while fishing in high seas.

Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Mobile clinic for poor

UPI, Maguindanao—At least 3,500 indigents here and in South Upi became the first recipients of medical services provided through the new mobile clinic of the national government to Maguindanao. Provincial health officer Tahir Sulaik said the arrival of the mobile clinic was timely in this "season of giving" as Christians celebrate Christmas and Muslims Eid'l Fit'r on Dec. 16-17. Gov. Andal Ampatuan said the mobile clinic would serve people in areas that need medical services.

Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Psychologists requested

BAGUIO CITY—Police here want psychologists to be assigned to the precincts to help sexually abused women and children cope with their trauma. Senior Insp. Teodora Abordo, chief of the women's desk of the Cordillera police, said they have submitted a proposal to the Philippine National Police asking for the assignment of at least one psychologist for every police precinct in the region. A policewoman is assigned to a police precinct in the Cordillera to take care of complaints on violence against women and children, but Abordo said: "They cannot in any way help the victims psychologically."

Jovelyn Reyes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Death for rapist grandpa

TARLAC CITY—A judge here meted the death penalty to a man for raping his 19-year-old granddaughter in La Paz town in March. Judge Bitty Viliran of the regional trial court here found the 40-year-old man guilty of raping the victim, the daughter of his niece. Viliran ordered the accused to pay the victim P50,000 in damages. Court records showed the victim was alone in her room when her grandfather raped her.

Ronaldo Dizon, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Air Macau over Clark

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—The Diosdado Macapagal International Airport will be a new point of destination for Air Macau, the designated flag carrier of the Macau Special Administrative Region (SAR). This was disclosed by Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez following the signing of the amendment to the air agreement between the Philippines and Macau SAR. Air Macau has scheduled flights to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and chartered flights to Laoag International Airport.

PDI Central Luzon Desk

Palawan wins awards

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Palawan and this city won the best marketing effort and best destination booth, respectively, in the Philippine Travel Mart in Mandaluyong City. Kalakbay, a Philippine tourism award-giving body, cited the Palawan Tourism Council as Tourism Council of the Year; and the Miniloc Island Resort and Club Paradise in Coron and Lagen Resort in El Nido as resorts of the year in different categories. The Gawad ng Pangulo sa Kapaligiran also cited Barracuda Lake and Estrella Falls as the cleanest and greenest inland bodies of water, and Brooke's Point and El Nido as cleanest and greenest local government units.

Jofelle P. Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Projects in 100 days

LEGAZPI CITY—The city government here has embarked on 26 projects worth P45.7 million during the first 100 days of the new city administration. The projects include the repair of 18 public elementary school buildings, energization of Sitio Anonang in Barangay Homapon, establishment of satellite clinics, and installation of communication facilities for 70 villages and offices of the city government.

Tony S. Macasinag, PDI southern Luzon Bureau

Gloria in Bicol

LEGAZPI CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo will be here this morning to attend the wedding of Legazpi City Mayor Noel E. Rosal and Geraldine Barrameda at 8:30 a.m. at the Our Lady of Fatima Shrine Parish, Tahao Road here. Bishop Jose C. Sorra will be the main celebrant and Bishop Lucilo B. Quiambao as concelebrant. Among those expected to attend as principal sponsors are Sen. Loren Legarda, Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos and businessman Eduardo Cojuangco.

Tony S. Macasinag, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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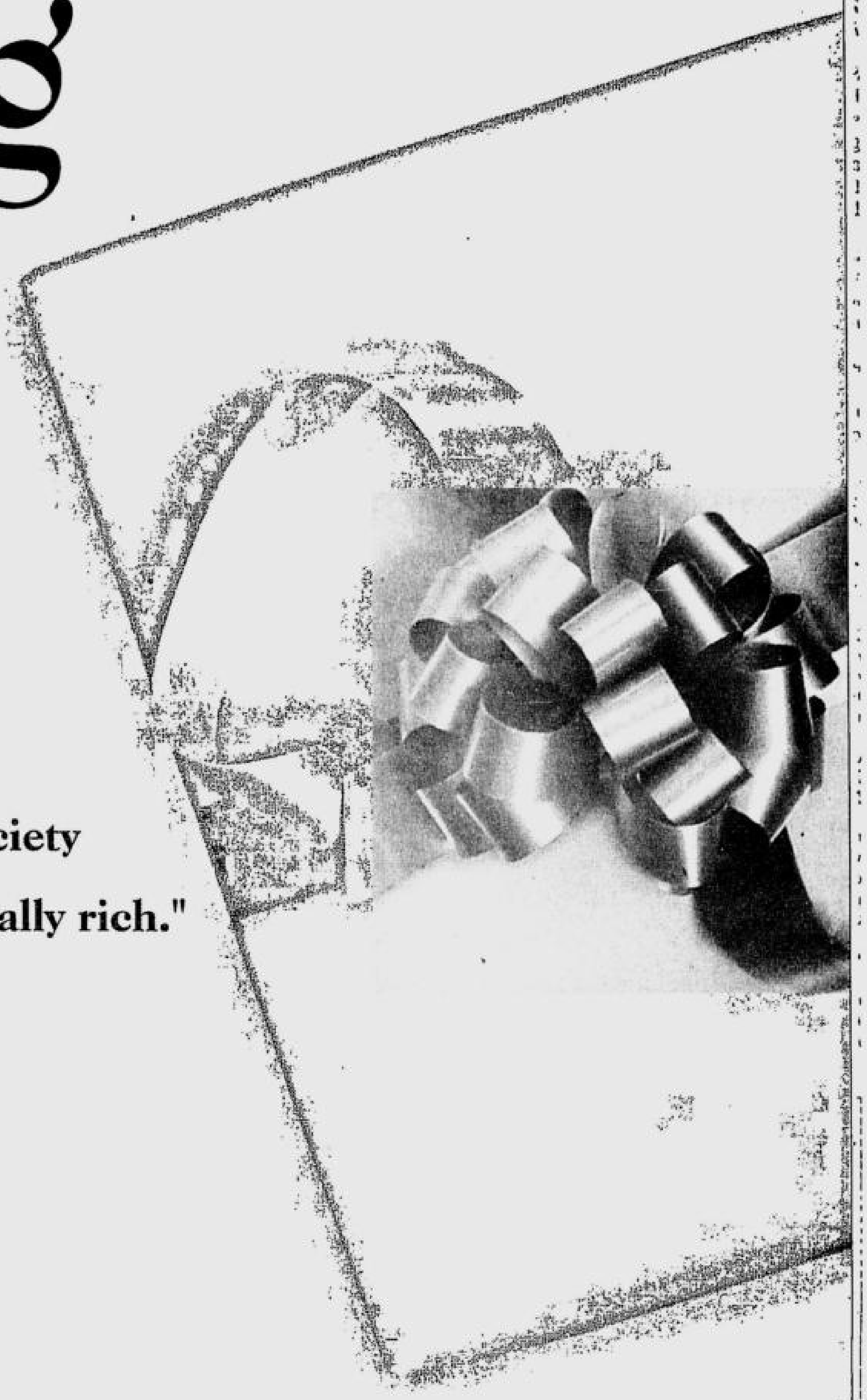

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-- Konosuke Matsushita

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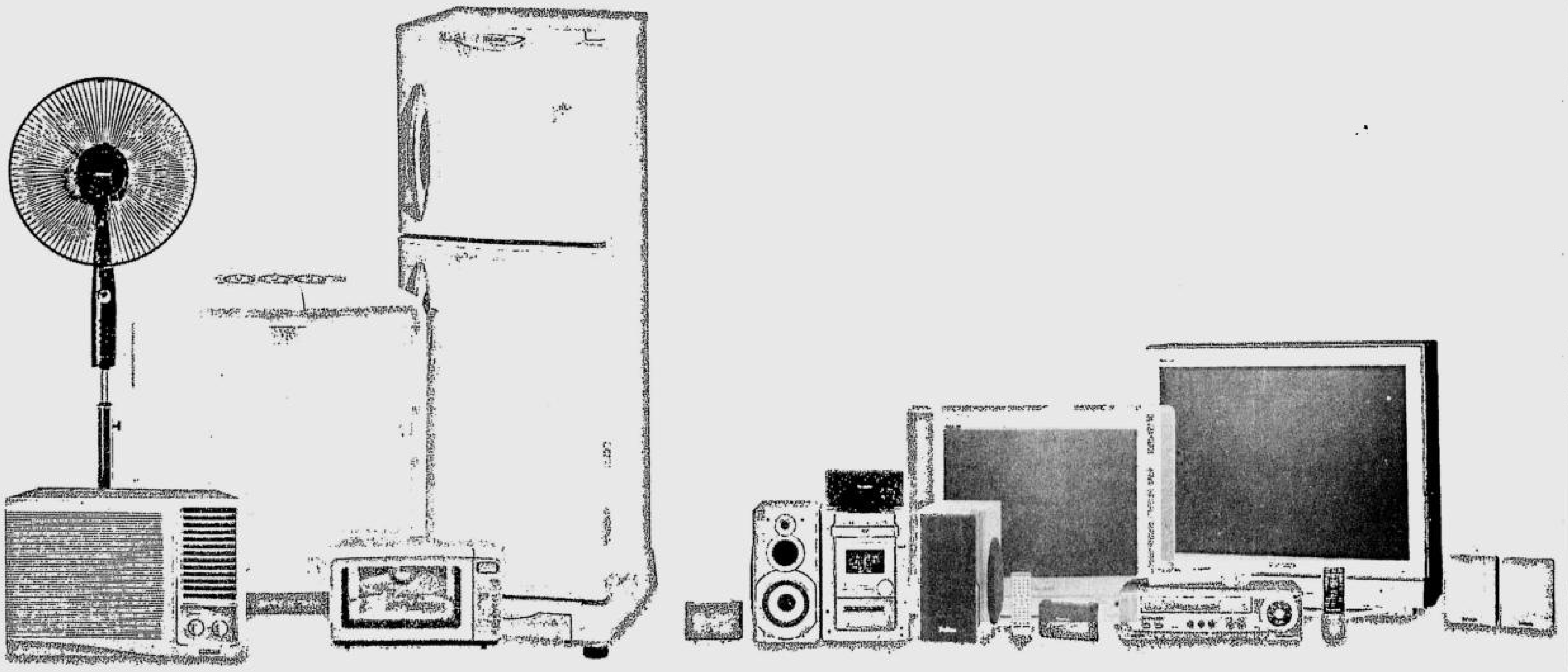

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INQUIRER Visayas
JUN BANDAYREL, Editor ■ EDRALYN L. BENEDICTO, Bureau Chief

A co-op's dream turns to straw

BY MA. DIOSA LABISTE
Iloilo City

EVEN before the country's first rice strawboard plant could make hay in helping solve the housing crisis in the country, it is now up for auction because the cooperative running it had defaulted on its loans.

Despite appeals from farmers, a court on Thursday proceeded with the auction of the property of First Iloilo Area Marketing Cooperative Inc.'s (FIAMCI) worth P64 million to pay its foreclosed loan of P17.8 million with the Landbank of the Philippines.

But only one bidder, Landbank, was interested to buy the property for P34.6 million. As a result, the auction was rescheduled to Dec. 19 because auction rules state that there should be at least two bidders.

As of May, FIAMCI owes the bank P29.3 million including interests and penalties. The cooperative is holding office in Sta. Barbara town, 16 kilometers from here.

The FIAMCI's fiasco is one of the many stories of how cooperatives failed in their mandate to help their members despite the resources poured on them. It was a costly lesson that cooperatives here could draw upon considering that members sank in P7.6 million in equity to the project. The rice strawboard project 'was part of then President Fidel Ramos' agriculture modernization program.

With some 6,000 members, FIAMCI is one of the biggest cooperatives in Iloilo. It is an umbrella of several cooperatives and Samahang Nayon, a farmers' association created under then President Marcos.

In 1994, it was convinced to host a rice strawboard manufacturing plant by Ramos who met experts on strawboard technology in Britain during one of his foreign trips. The strawboard factory was set up with the help of Australians.

Lumber scarcity

Strawboard was considered an answer to the scarcity of lumber at a time when the government canceled Timber License Agreements to protect forests. Strawboard, made of rice straws, was to replace plywood for walls, partitions, ceilings and floors. It was said to be durable, easy to install, fire-resistant and versatile. It could also help reduce noise and was cheaper than lumber-based panels.

The strawboard plant was established in 1996 through loans from the Landbank and the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA). The CDA released a loan of P12.7 million and a grant of P10 million to be converted as preferred shares. The CDA was the second mortgagor of FIAMCI's property.

Aside from the LankBank and the CDA, FIAMCI received a windfall of grants from other government agencies and officials. These donors included then Sen. Agapito Aquino (P1 million); the Presidential Management Staff of President Ramos (P3 million); Office of then Iloilo Gov. Arthur Defensor (P3 million); then Iloilo Rep. Alberto Lopez of the second district (P2.5 million); then Sen. Raul Roco (P50,000); and the municipality of Sta. Barbara, (P111,000).

The project sought to help farmers, who were sources of rice straw from 5,000 hectares of farmlands in the province. The farmers would earn P6,000 per hectare from their rice straw, which were otherwise burned, plowed under or left to rot.

In its marketing study, the FIAMCI targeted the government's low-cost housing projects as a market for the strawboard panels. From 1993 to 1998, the country's housing demand was placed at 3.8 million units, of which 247,470 units were needed in Western Visayas, comprising the provinces of Iloilo, Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Negros Occidental and Guimaras. The cooperative claimed then that it was capable of supplying boards for 2,700 to 3,000 houses annually.

Remained in paper

But FIAMCI's targets remained just in paper because the multi-million project "has not taken off from then on," said Iniego Varon, Landbank regional chief based in Iloilo City.

Varon said the project failed because of FIAMCI's management and marketing problems. He said the bank gave FIAMCI enough time to shape up. He added that FIAMCI did not market the strawboard or "never made extra effort to sell the product."

Since 1996, the project only generated sales of some P900,000, mostly from walk-in clients. The amount was not even enough to pay for its first amortization of P1.2 million, which was due in 1999. The cooperative failed to pay the bank despite a restructuring agreement.

Varon said the bank's president, Margarito Teves, asked the cooperative to present a strategic marketing plan and a certification that they could sell their produce to government housing projects.

Varon added that what they got were "mere promises" from the FIAMCI. The bank finally decided to foreclose the loan in May and gave a final demand letter to the FIAMCI the following month.

"I know that FIAMCI officials are sentimental about it but we are a bank and the loan came from money of our depositors. Foreclosing it would stop the rise of interest rates," he said.

The Landbank, however, is not closing its doors on FIAMCI, said Varon. The cooperative has a year to redeem the property, although banking rules give them only three months. He said he could always reconsider if he would see signs that the strawboard project is being rehabilitated.

Last ditch effort

But FIAMCI felt that the bank's "kindness" was not good enough. In a last ditch effort, a general assembly passed a resolution on Dec. 10, "urgently requesting" President Macapagal-Arroyo, Teves, Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas, Sta. Barbara Mayor Isabelo Maquino and CDA chair Jose Medina to intercede on their behalf by asking the bank to grant them a one-year grace period to pay their loans.

According to the resolution endorsed by 20 cooperative leaders and representatives, other government offices have a stake in the project. The resolution said they should be given enough time to consult with the FIAMCI, out of courtesy and respect.

Copies of the resolution was also given to Senators Franklin Drilon, Loren Legarda, Representatives Raul Gonzalez, Arthur Defensor, Rolex Suplico, Narciso Monfort and Oscar Garin.

Francisco Sumagaysay, chair of FIAMCI, said they already complied with the bank's demand to present a marketing plan and obtain an approval from the Accreditation of Innovative Technologies for Housing (Aitech) of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC).

Wilfredo Labaro, member of the FIAMCI's board of directors, said he recently received P5 million in purchase order from the Angat Pinoy Multipurpose Cooperative that would build low-cost houses and P500,000 in orders to build school buildings in several towns in the second district of Iloilo.

But Varon said the accreditation and the purchase orders came too late.

Failure

Labaro admitted that the cooperative was mismanaged. He said the cooperative has no capacity to market the P1.9-million worth of unsold rice strawboard panels, which are in its warehouse.

The Cooperative Union of the Philippines (CUP) was tapped to promote and market the product in 1996 when it was launched. But the CUP failed to get massive orders forcing the cooperative to stop producing the strawboard panels in 1998.

In May last year, Iloilo Rep. Augusto Syjuco's Tawo kag Duta Foundation, headed by its executive director Manuel Mejorada, was hired for the same purpose.

In the memorandum of agreement between the foundation and the cooperative, some P5 million was supposed to be infused as capital from the pork barrel of Syjuco. Another P2 million from the Presidential Management Staff was also promised to the project through the congressman's foundation.

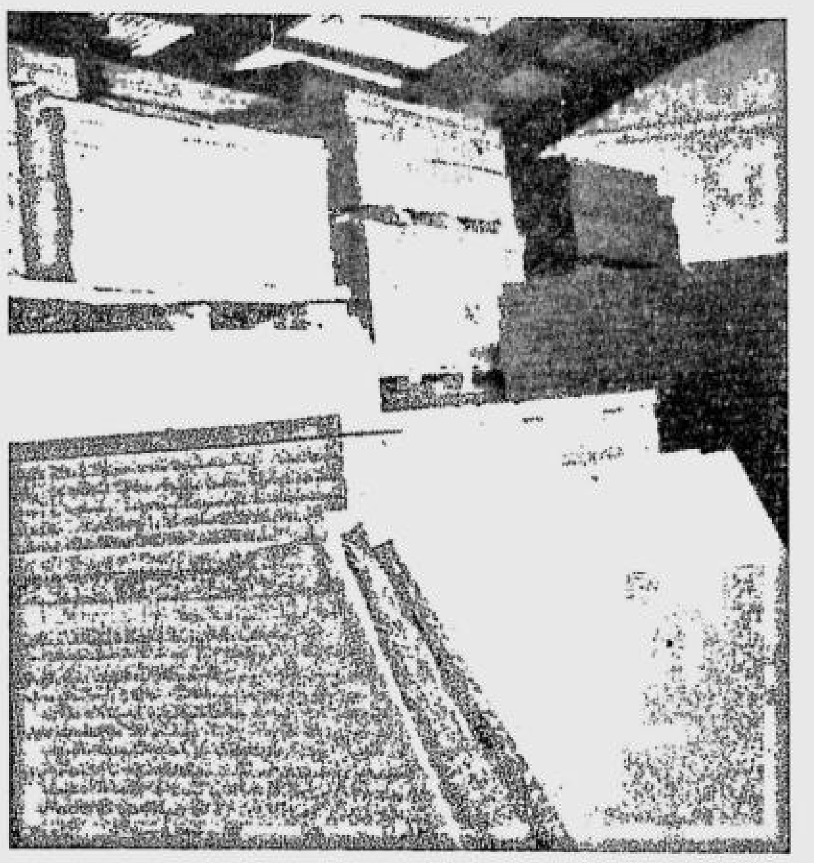
Like the CUP, the foundation failed to deliver, forcing FIAMCI to rescind its contract last February. Labaro said only P773,000 reached FIAMCI from PMS.

A United States-based entity, Pacific Agri-Services Inc., also showed interest in marketing the strawboard on June 18. But the Sept. 11 suicide attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and on the Pentagon caused the firm to declare that it was no longer viable to market the strawboard in the US, South Korea and Japan.

In a dialog with Tupas early this month, FIAMCI officials were hoping they could get the governor's sympathy. Unfortunately, Varon was more convincing than they were.

Tupas, who had an appointment that time, left his executive assistant, Manuel Mejorada, to face them. Mejorada was in favor of foreclosing and auctioning off FIAMCI's property, said Labaro.

"We are sentimental about it (the strawboard plant). The investment came from marginal farmers' hard-earned money," said Labaro.



FINISHED strawboards waiting for buyers at the FIAMCI warehouse.
PHOTO COURTESY OF FIAMCI

Times are hard, but . . .

ECHOES FROM LEYTE

Loly Perez Isiderio

THE SEASON of joy, reunions, merry-making and of giving and receiving gifts has come.

So I looked around for something happy to write about. I did not have to look far. First, typhoon "Quedan" just lightly brushed past Leyte and moved to a northwesterly direction.

Fortunately, it did not collide, as at first feared, with another low-pressure area coming in from Palawan. The last three months of the year have always been typhoon months in Leyte. But after the El Niño and La Niña phenomena, the weather patterns have changed.

Despite the many bleak news on the national front, there were some good news in Leyte. Foremost were the cash bonuses that have finally been approved both on the provincial and Tacloban City levels. Leyte Gov. Remedios Petilla saw to it that an additional Christmas bonus would be given to all rank and file employees and elected officials of the province. Petilla said this conformed to Budget Circular 2001-02 that allowed the release of extra bonuses to government employees if the concerned office had savings.

More bonuses

In Taclpban City, Mayor Alfredo Romualdez had ordered the release of P7.7 million in Economic Upliftment Allowance for all regular, appointed, elected, casual and job-order employees.

Petilla also unveiled an affordable housing and livelihood program for Leyte government employees. The province allotted an initial five hectares on its property in Sitio Pulak, Sta. Fe town which is about 12 kilometers from Tacloban City. This program allowed the employee to choose the amount of amortization and type of house based on his capacity to pay.

A group of five employees would undergo four weeks of value-formation training before availing of this program. The program also seeks to augment the employees' income through a savings association, cooperative market and livelihood projects.

Another thing that the governor continues to do is travel abroad to build linkages for Leyte. This month, before the National Boy Scout Jamboree takes place here in Leyte, she will go to China on an invitation to attend the sisterhood conference that will focus on the promotion of relationships between Leyte and chosen cities and provinces of China. She hopes to find business investors for Leyte or for the region.

Teachers' worry

Talking with some teachers, we discussed something that had been bothering them since October. This was the report about the Professional Regulatory Commission (PRC) preparing to file charges against 50 persons in Eastern Visayas who were believed to hold fake professional licenses.

I found that charges were being prepared against some government employees, not necessarily teachers.

I met with PRC director German Palabyab and in a very short time I learned a great deal about his office. Most of the things I found out made me proud for Leyte and Region 8.

First was that in the exams for midwifery given by the PRC last month, all 35 examinees passed and three of the topnotchers were from Tacloban City and Leyte. The results came out a week after the exams.

The results of the Certified Public Accountant exams given last October came out a week later. This is always a hard nut to crack. But we had a 12-percent passing rate, just slightly lower than the national percentage.

But the prohibitive costs of taking these exams in Manila keep many graduates from taking the exams.

Another PRC exam for civil engineers given last May also proved that we did have something to show for. Eastern Visayas had a 52-percent passing average, which was higher than the 35-percent national average.

A precursor to a happy new year is the concert tour in 10 cities, including Tacloban.

Piano concert

This is a romantic piano concerto journey undertaken as an outreach program by two of the Philippines' finest concert artists—pianists Ingrid Sala-Santamaria and Reynaldo G. Reyes.

The purpose is to encourage the attendance of educators, artists, students, music lovers, in selected popular piano concerts of the great composers of the world.

This tour will be held in January to usher in the New Year. The venue in Tacloban City is Hotel Alejandro.

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And even if times are hard, I'd like to greet everyone a Merry Christmas.

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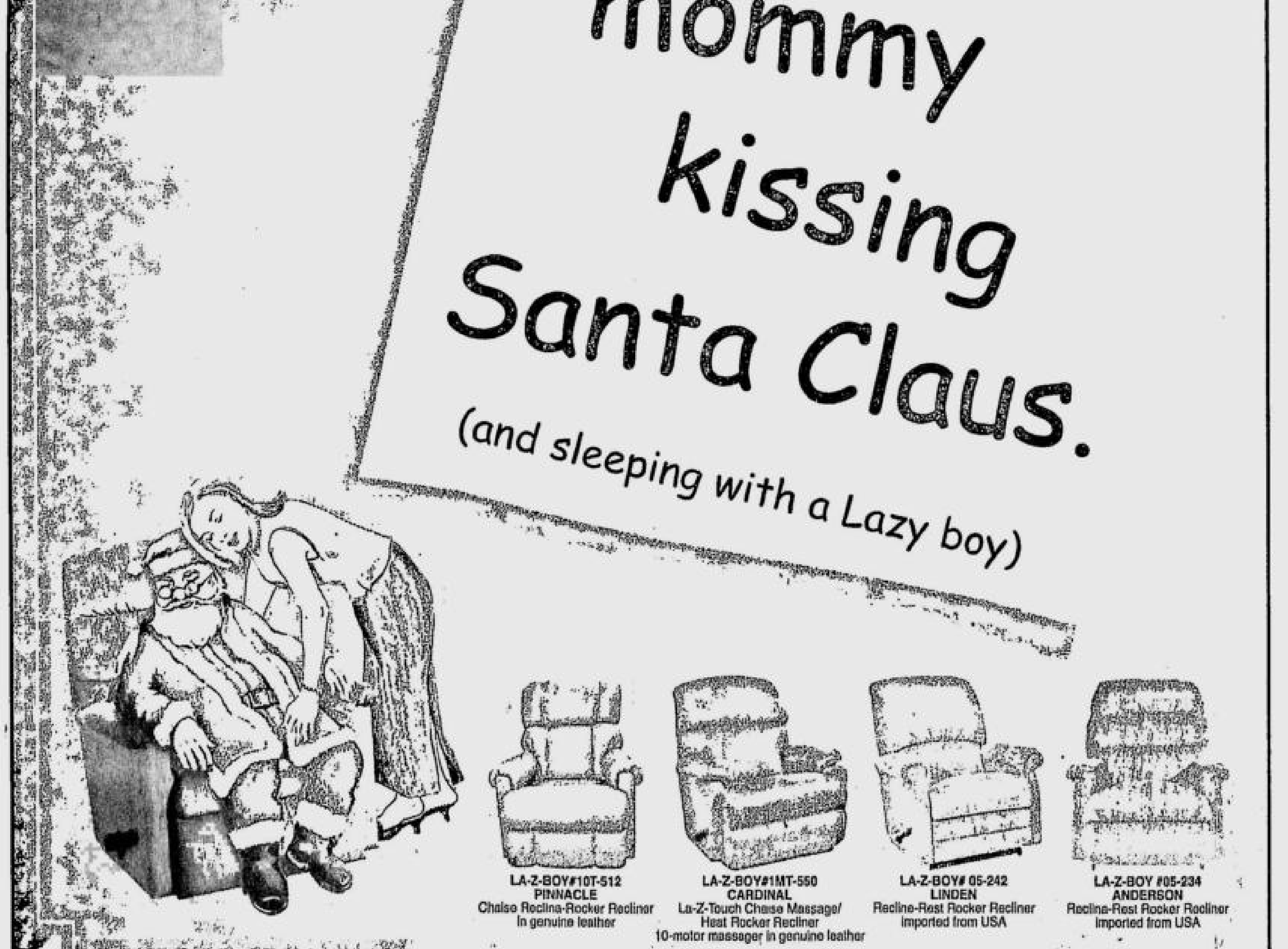
I saw mommy kissing Santa Claus.
(and sleeping with a Lazy boy)

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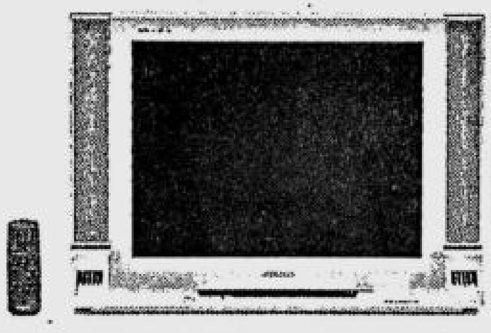

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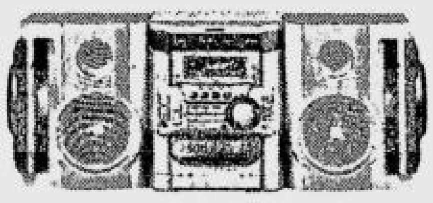

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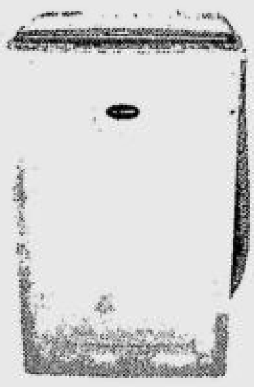

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ABENSON

SC rules coconut levy 'public funds'

(From page A1)

ing, Carranza said that there was now no reason for the coconut farmers to even consider surrendering the coco levy funds.

The UCPB shares are sequestered shares on the premise that the entire bank was acquired using coco levy funds, Carranza explained.

The Supreme Court ruling also has an effect on all the coco levy funds as UCPB was designated as the administrator of the funds as well as all the assets acquired using the funds, Carranza said.

In upholding the right of the PCGG over the sequestered UCPB shares, the high court said that the coco levy was raised with the use of the police and taxing powers of the State. It said the levy constituted "enforced contributions exacted on pain of penal sanction."

The high court's decision delved only on the issue of coco levy funds used in purchasing the UCPB shares, and not on the 31-percent shares of San Miguel Corp., which were also acquired using coco levy funds collected from coconut farmers from 1973 to 1982. The 31-percent stake in San Miguel under the name of the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF) is now estimated at P50 billion and is part of the P130 billion in total coco levy funds.

The tribunal stressed that the final determination as to whether all coco levy funds were public in character rested on the Sandiganbayan, which has been hearing the civil cases filed by Cojuangco (the SMC chair), the Philippine Coconut Federation (Cocofed), PCGG and "1 million farmers" over the last 15 years.

The high court then ordered the Sandiganbayan to decide with finality the "aforesaid civil case (UCPB case) within a period of six months from notice."

Carranza said the PCGG "will probably ask the defendants (in the Sandiganbayan cases) to already present their evidence" as the government might not need to present evidence anymore supporting the public character of the coco levy because of the Supreme Court's pronouncement.

In upholding the PCGG petition, the high court set aside the Feb. 28, 2001 Sandiganbayan ruling allowing Cocofed, Cojuangco, among others, to vote the sequestered shares.

Supreme Court spokesperson Ismael Khan said the high court's decision to declare as merely "prima facie" the public character of the coco levy funds was made only to allow the PCGG to vote the sequestered shares during the UCPB's shareholders' meeting. (Prima facie means at first sight, apparent, on the face of it.)

"To avoid misunderstanding and confusion, the court said it is now more categorical and positive than its earlier pronouncements: the coconut levy funds are not only affected with public interest; they are in fact prima facie public funds," Khan said.

He added: "The origin of the funds are public in character but as to whether the coco levy funds per se are public in character . . . that issue is not treated in the decision."

Signal to Sandiganbayan

But high court insiders said its latest decision was sending a strong signal to the Sandiganbayan that the contested coco levy funds were public in character. A ruling to the contrary will only be reversed by the high court, the insiders say.

The high court decision stemmed from a PCGG petition for certiorari with a prayer for the issuance of a temporary restraining order filed by the PCGG to set aside a Feb. 28, 2001 Sandiganbayan resolution. (A writ of certiorari is one issued by a superior court to an inferior court requiring the latter to produce a certified record of a case tried therein.)

Named respondents were Cocofed, Ballares et al, Cojuangco and the Sandiganbayan.

The Sandiganbayan resolution allowed the respondents to exercise their rights to vote their shares of stock and to be voted upon in the UCPB stockholders' meeting on March 6, 2001.

The case was initially raffled off to the Supreme Court's Third Division, but was elevated to the en banc (full court).

On April 17, 2001, the court admitted the intervention of a group of coconut farmers, the Pambansang Koalisyon ng mga Samahang Magsasaka at Manggagawa ng Niyugan, which claimed that its members had been excluded from the benefits of the coco levy funds.

In acting on the petition, the SC decided on whether the Sandiganbayan committed grave abuse of discretion when it issued the disputed order allowing respondents to vote UCPB shares of stock registered in the name of respondents.

Simply stated, the court said the issue to be resolved was "who may vote the sequestered UCPB while the main case for their reversion to the state is pending in the Sandiganbayan."

The court said the PCGG petition was impressed with merit. "The court holds that the government should be allowed to continue voting those shares inasmuch as they were purchased with coconut levy funds—funds that are prima facie public in character or, at the very least, are 'clearly affected with public interest.'"

The court granted the PCGG the right to vote the sequestered shares because they appeared to be "assets belonging to the government itself."

"This court believes that the government should be allowed to vote the questioned shares, because they belong to it as the prima facie beneficial and true owner," the high court said.

In determining the issue of whether the PCGG should be allowed to vote the sequestered shares, the court said it was crucial to find out first whether these were purchased with public funds.

As a general rule, the registered owner of shares of a corporation exercises the right and the privilege of voting. But this principle applies only to shares sequestered by the government.

Two-tiered test

But the government is authorized to vote these shares if it is able to satisfy the two-tiered test—first, if there is a prima facie evidence showing that the shares were ill-gotten, and second, if there is an imminent danger of dissipation of the shares.

However, the court has provided two clear "public character" exceptions—"where government shares are taken over by private persons/owners and where the capitalization or shares that were acquired with public funds somehow landed in private hands."

"In short, when the sequestered shares registered in the names of private individuals or entities are alleged to have been acquired with ill-gotten wealth, then the two-tiered test is applied.

"However, when the sequestered shares in the name of private individuals or entities as shown, prima facie, to have been (1) originally government shares, or (2) purchased with public funds or those affected with public interest, then the two-tiered test does not apply. Rather the public, character exceptions in Baseco vs. PCGG and Cojuangco Jr. vs. Roxas prevails; that is, the government shall vote the shares," the high court said.

The high court said that the money used to purchase the sequestered UCPB shares came from the Coconut Consumer Stabilization Fund (CCSF), known as the coconut levy funds.

The high court said that "inasmuch as the subject UCPB shares in the present case were undisputedly acquired with coco levy funds which are public in character, then the right to vote them shall be exercised by the PCGG. In sum, the 'public character test, not the two-tiered' one, applies in the instant controversy."

Roots of the controversy

The court said the controversy all started immediately after Edsa I in 1986. Then President Corazon Aquino issued Executive Order Nos. 1, 2 and 14 to recover the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses and their dummies.

Executive Order No. 14 empowered the PCGG to file and prosecute all cases investigated under EO 1 and 2.

Based on these EOs, the PCGG sequestered and took over allegedly ill-gotten companies and assets, including the UCPB shares of stock, which were registered in the names of the alleged "1 milli on coconut farmers" from the so-called CIIF companies and Cojuangco.

On July 31, 1987, the PCGG instituted an action for reconveyance of the UCPB shares under Case No. 0033.

On Nov. 15, the Sandiganbayan issued a resolution lifting the sequestration of the UCPB shares on the grounds that private respondents Cocofed and CIIF companies had not been impleaded (sued) by the PCGG as parties-defendants.

The Sandiganbayan ruled that the writ of sequestration issued by the PCGG was automatically lifted for its failure to commence the corresponding judicial action within the six-month period ending on Aug. 2, 1987 as mandated by the Constitution.

The Sandiganbayan resolution was challenged by the PCGG, which then secured a TRO to stop the holding of election of the UCPB board.

On Feb. 16, 1993, the court declared that the Cojuangco et al's right to vote "cannot be conceded at this time" since "that right has to be established by them before the Sandiganbayan."

On Jan. 23, 1995, the court nullified the Nov. 15, 1990 Sandiganbayan resolution, which earlier lifted the sequestration of the shares.

A month later, the PCGG subdivided Case No. 0033 into eight complaints.

Six years after, the UCPB board demanded the holding of the stockholders' meeting on March 16, 2001.

However, the court restrained the holding of the election pending its decision on the PCGG complaint.

Kirin entry seen . . .

(From page A1)

cent of SMC.

"Let me say though that outside of the complications regarding the coco levy issue, half a billion dollars in investment from a major world firm is a shot in the arm of the Philippine economy," Ms Macapagal said in her regular press conference in Malacañang.

The President said she wanted to have an analysis of how the sale would affect the government's claim over the levy funds but she noted "a solution" would have to be found if the transaction will prove adverse to the government's position.

The alliance with Kirin would allow Cojuangco to match the government block's diluted holdings in SMC estimated at 37 percent following the buy-in. But Cojuangco's control of the SMC Retirement Fund, which has a 6-percent interest in the company, gives him the edge over the government block in any voting.

By getting a key partner well ahead of next summer's crucial stockholders meeting, Cojuangco is hoping to maintain his hold on eight of the 15 board seats at SMC.

At present, Cojuangco controls eight board seats—three seats representing his contested 21-percent share and the remaining five held by Estrada nominees, who stayed on the board despite protests from the PCGG.

If Cojuangco manages to firm up his control of SMC, the Marcos and Estrada crony is widely expected to launch a management buy-out of the shares held by the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF) using the $540 million proceeds from the Kirin investments and realize his goal of controlling SMC and eliminating government intervention.

The PCGG had wanted to put in a new set of nominees during this year's stockholders' meeting but it failed to beat the January deadline for submitting its bets.

The deadline coincided with then President Joseph Estrada's final day in Malacañang.

The Supreme Court ruling that the coco levy shares are public has further bolstered the PCGG's suspicion that the Kirin scheme was meant to pre-empt a court decision.

If the PCGG is allowed to vote in its representatives to the board (which it is likely to do next year), the government (including the Government Service Insurance System and Social Security System) would regain control of the company and Cojuangco would slide back to his minority position in the company.

Cojuangco yesterday assured that the $540 million in fresh funds to be infused by Kirin would not be used to dilute or gobble up the sequestered shares in the food and beverage giant.

But analysts said the deal would put Cojuangco in a stronger position to maintain his chairmanship of SMC despite the Supreme Court's ruling in favor of the government's position that the coco levy should be considered public funds.

In a joint press briefing with top officials of Kirin, Cojuangco assured that the transaction would only dilute a little the stake of other shareholders as the 442.6 million in new shares to be issued to Kirin was equivalent to the shares bought back under SMC's share repurchase program in 1999 and 2001.

"This issue will have negligible effect on the ownership percentage of existing stockholders before the share buyback. In relation, for example, to the CIIF shares, it is less than one percent dilution," Cojuangco said.

Cojuangco said Kirin would be allowed to nominate two directors to the 15-member board.

Estelito Mendoza, SMC director and general counsel, said the two board seats to be taken over by Kirin would represent the seats allocated to SMC management and the investing public.

Based on the numbers, the five board seats representing the combined shares held by Cojuangco and Kirin will still be outnumbered by the seven board seats representing government-held interest.

However, analysts said Cojuangco could still reelect himself as SMC chair with a vote of 8-7, as the three management nominees are expected to vote in favor of Cojuangco.

According to Mendoza, it was noted during yesterday's SMC board meeting when the deal was ratified that the funds to be raised could not be used to purchase the CIIF-held shares. He said the same concern was raised during the SMC board meeting yesterday.

Mendoza also said the Kirin deal would not be affected by the PCGG's moves as the shares to be sold were not under litigation.

"The PCGG can still do what it is supposed to do, such as sell the CIIF shares, with or without this deal," Mendoza said.

The deal with Kirin included a five-year lock-up period and right of first refusal between the Japanese brewer and Cojuangco, which means that should Kirin decide to sell out after five years, Cojuangco would have the first option to buy and vice versa.

Koichiro Aramaki, Kirin president, said: "We have been impressed with the management team at SMC and this investment is a clear signal of the importance of Asia in Kirin's strategy. SMC has a large-scale influence in Southeast Asia and China. It is a diversified food and beverage company like Kirin. These are the reasons for this partnership and this investment is a clear signal of the importance of Asia in Kirin's strategy."

The Multi-Sectoral Task Force on the Coconut Levy, led by the Bishop-Businessmen's Conference (BBC), has objected to the Kirin deal because it would deprive the other SMC shareholders, particularly the CIIF, of their pre-emptive right to buy the new shares and Treasury shares to be sold to the Japanese beer giant.

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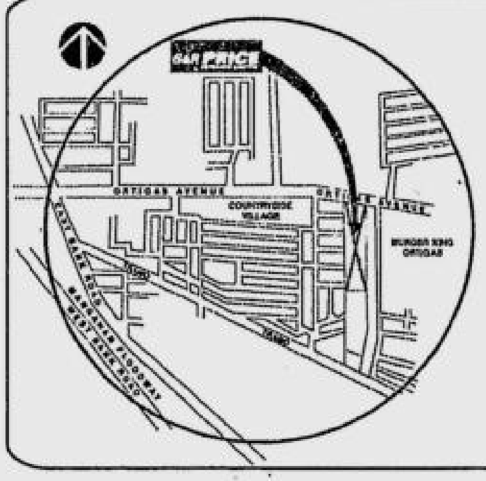

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SPORTSWATCH

Nat'l players defy Philta

MEN'S Professional Tennis Council of the Philippines incoming president Adelo Abadia said he and the rest of the country's top tennisters will defy the orders of the Philippine Tennis Association and push through with the induction of officers today at the Philippine Columbian Association. Abadia said there's no stopping them from formally assuming key positions in the group whose foremost goal is to provide local players a regular source of livelihood through a regular yearlong tennis circuit.

Cycling Challenge today

SOME 70 professional and amateur cyclists from all over the country are set to compete in the biggest cycling event of the year, the Rexona Ultimate Cycling Challenge. The race will kick off at the Quezon City Hall today. The race will have two phases. The first phase is from Quezon City to Olongapo (332 kilometers) and the second, from Mabalacat to Baguio City (172 kilometers).

GenSan High gains semis

GEN. SANTOS CITY—Host General Santos National High rode forward Alfred Basino's hat-trick to a come-from-behind 3-2 victory over Surigao Norte National High Thursday to barge into the semifinals of the Mindanao Coke Go-for-Goal under-16 football finals at the Antonio Acharon Sports Center here. Basino struck in the 43rd, 46th, and 47th minutes to wipe out a 2-0 Surigao Norte lead. Rizal Memorial Colleges joined General Santos National High, defending champion La Salle Academy of Iligan and Zamboanga Norte in the semis.

Black Stallion shares lead

BLACK Stallion and Relentless scored three points each to show the way in the second round elimination of the 1st Luzviminda Slasher Cup 6-Cock Derby at the Roligon Mega Cockpit in Parañaque City. Owned by cockers Romy Tan/Ray/Showdown and Emit San Juan, respectively, they joined early qualifiers Gold Cup sa Texas by William Go, ASF/JPC-Showdown by P. Chua/Danny Ty and Dragon X-696 by Abba. For inquiries call Tiling, Fred or Rezel at Roligon Mega Cockpit at 833-16-38 or 833-22-75.

Bata, Delasin chosen 'Athletes of the Year'

REYES

DELASIN

EFREN "Bata" Reyes and Dorothy Delasin were chosen yesterday the PSA top Athletes of the Year.

Reyes earned 37 votes in secret balloting by members of the Philippine Sportswriters Association this week.

He outpointed world boxing champion Manny Pacquiao (11) and Southeast Asian Games double gold medalist Eduardo Buenavista (3) to become the PSA's top male athlete of the year.

Delasin, last year's Top Athlete of the Year, won her second title as the best female athlete with a runaway vote of 43. She beat Liza del Rosario (9), the Southeast Asian Games gold medalist in the women's doubles in bowling and finalist in the prestigious World Cup in bowling in Pattaya, Thailand.

The two top athletes will receive the highest honor of the sportswriting fraternity from President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who has been invited to be the guest of honor and speaker during the awarding rites on Jan. 11 at the Holiday Inn Manila.

The Awards Night, to be attended also by sports officials and members of the corporate community, is sponsored by Photokina Marketing and supported by the Philippine Sports Commission.

Reyes, 47, became the toast of the game this year when he won four major titles and a record P12.4 million. His major titles include the US Masters in Chesapeake, the Accu-Stats 8-ball in Los Angeles, the Tokyo 9-ball Championships, the World Pool Invitational in Warsaw, Poland and his one-on-one duel with women's world champion Jeanette Lee of the US.

Delasin, 21, took a four-stroke victory in one of the majors of the US Ladies Pro Golf Association—the Samsung Championships in Vallejo, California—to win a record purse of $157,000, her biggest paycheck so far, in notching her third career triumph.

All the other candidates will receive the PSA Major Awards along with those chosen in amateur and professional basketball, amateur boxing and horse of the year.

Banal Ateneo coach

ATENEO yesterday picked veteran Joel Banal as its new head coach for the 2002 UAAP season, the Ateneo de Manila University Athletics Council chaired by Fr. Bienvenido Nebres, SJ, announced.

Deserving

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

THEY deserve it.

Golfer Dorothy Joy Delasin and billiards magician Efren "Bata" Reyes chosen to share this year's Athlete of the Year honors was a master's stroke. Both are second-termers: Bata in 1999, Dorothy last year. They won running away.

Bata earned it anew for his streak of victories in world jousts from September to November, scoring two of his biggest feats in Poland and Japan. Although he failed in Cardiff, Wales, where he prevailed in 1999, Bata bounced back with a bang to sweep four world tournaments.

Delasin won "just" two legs in the LPGA, but her two victories were carved in stunning fashion. She successfully defended her Giant Eagle crown when she scored a come-from-behind victory. Then she ruled the World Championship—the youngest ever to win the most coveted crown in professional women's golf. Only the world's Top 20 have been invited to play; although she was the youngest from the field, she emerged the best.

Bata's long-playing feats have sparked billiardsmania in the country. Dorothy has become the role model for many girls aspiring to become world-beaters in golf.

Here's a glass to them.

■

Best wishes to Robert Alcoran and Sheila Royeca, who will tie the knot today in General Santos City. I am a "ninong" but Dayong (his son Mayo is the ring bearer) will proxy for me due to pressure of work. I'm sure the couple will understand?

Mahirap po ang buhay-peryodista.

ICTSI eyes revenge over Ateneo-Pioneer

NBA RESULTS

Indiana 108, Houston 106, OT; Charlotte 104, Toronto 90; Detroit 99, New York 97; Dallas 102, Cleveland 82; Denver 89, Memphis 86; Orlando 105, Golden State 100. *AP*

GAMES TODAY
2 p.m.—Kutitap Toothpaste vs Montaña Jewels
4 p.m.—Ateneo-Pioneer vs ICTSI Archers

TO STRENTHEN its hold of the leadership, International Container Terminal Services Inc-Archers needs to exact revenge over rival Ateneo-Pioneer in today's PBL Challenge Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

The Insurers handed the Archers their worst beating, 66-49, in the first round. Coach Franz Pumaren used that setback to motivate his charges to play better.

"Manpower-wise, Ateneo-Pioneer has the edge. Its lineup is a coach's dream," said Pumaren."To get even we must stick to our game plan." ICTSI is a nononsense full-court, trapping team which capitalizes on its foes' turnovers.

The Ateneo-Pioneer-ICTSI Archers tussle is set at 4 p.m., after the 2 p.m. encounter between Kutitap Toothpaste and Montaña Jewels. *Dennis U. Eroa*

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De Castro battles Soldevillo

JANDRICK de Castro plays James Soldevillo and William Murrell battles Barry Lee in the boys' 18-under of the fourth Armando Manzano Cup age group tennis tournament which starts today at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Other matches pit Mark Jorolan against Genesis Cabigao, Miguel Narvaez against Rolly Anasta and Jomar Easpela against Mauric Lao.

Action in the boys' 16-under class begins at 2 p.m. with Lawrence Magaway facing Gerry Huyo-A, Ed Angelo Diez meeting Vyaki Sabandon, Martin Santos squaring off with Arithmetico Lim and Kyle Dandan challenging Narvaez.

In the girls division, Kristel Samala tangles with Katrina Pamintuan while Alyssa Labay meets Catherine Flores in the 18-under starting at 11 a.m.

Also scheduled are the boys' and girls' 14-under, 12-under and unisex 10-under.

Winners in this two-weekend tournament sponsored by Viva Mineral Water, Dunlop and PSC will receive 120 Philta junior points.

Merin rules Trax anniversary race

TRIAN Merin of TDK bested some 300 Tamiya racing rivals to capture the Trax 1st Anniversary Invitational Cup mini 4WD race recently at the GameworX, fourth level of Festival Supermall Filinvest Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

With five entries in the field, Merin dominated the races, winning the P20,000 top prize plus a silver trophy from sponsor GameworX Inc., led by president Jesus Jun Avecilla.

Giovanni Bahia of Team G took second place and the P10,000 purse, while Lito Lumibao took the third-place honor and P5,000.

Renan Beredo won the fastest lap award after his entry registered 16.59 seconds to run away with P5,000 and a silver trophy.

Greenwood paces Sagupaan derby

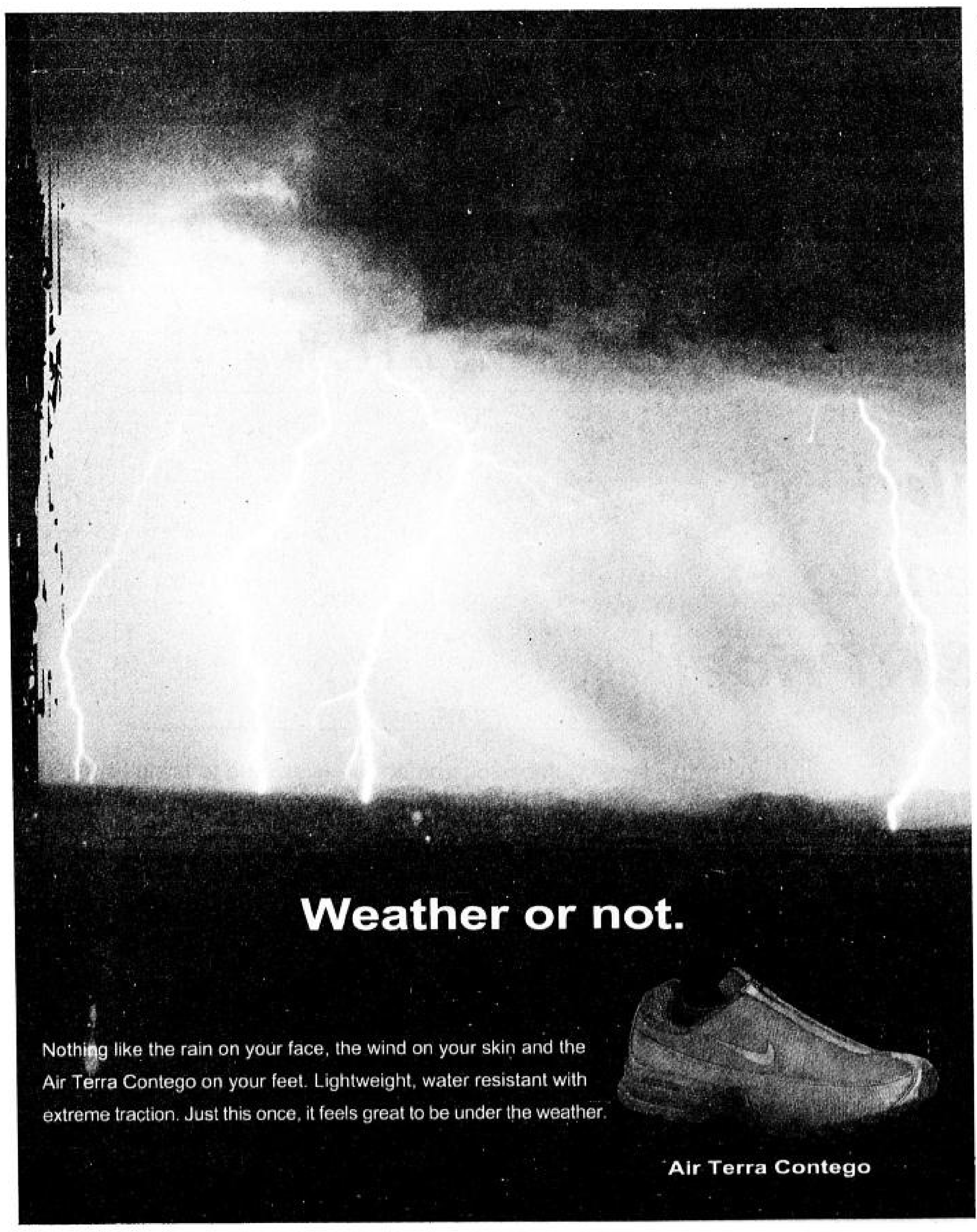
THE POPULAR BJ Greenwood entry of Ucap president Butch Macasaet racked up six straight wins and a draw to emerge as solo champion of the "1st Ucap/Sagupaan Altuz 7-Cock derby" Thursday night at the Mandaluyong Coliseum.

Macasaet, who fielded the hard-hitting Bacolod Roundhead Lemons, thus gained the early lead in the "Ucap Cocker of the Year 2001-2002" race.

Meanwhile, much-awaited "Ucap Gaffers 4-Cock Derby" finally unfolds this coming Tuesday, Dec. 18 with at least 25 cockers and breeders taking part. Sponsors are Sagupaan Super Feeds and Washout Shampoo.

To host the event are Ucap's trusted gaffers, led by Noli Esterellado, Jing Licaros, Victor Medina, Albert Margen, Dante Aroni and Bonjing Catajan.

Two lucky winners will be drawn in the raffle draw on Tuesday. The winners are entitled to round-trip tickets for two to Cebu, two nights of hotel accommodation at the Waterfront Hotel plus P10,000 each in pocket.



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US NCAA—Cincinnati vs Xavier at 10 a.m. (r – 5 p.m.) on ESPN
GOLF: US Open Official Film—1991 at 12 noon (r) on ESPN
PGA—Nissan Open, Third Round at 1 p.m. on Star Sports

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▩ **EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA**, Assistant Editor

SEIGLE (right) shooting over Espino.
FILE PHOTO/
ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Jacobs choice: 18 PBA cagers

By June Navarro

ASIAN Games coach Ron Jacobs has started pruning down the list of almost 50 aspirants but declined to name the players who were given the pink slip yesterday at the end of the one-week tryouts.

Jacobs said he expected to have 24-30 players on or before Jan. 7. He said 18 will come from the PBA, five or six from the MBA, three or four from the amateurs and a couple of picks.

"I don't want to name names but certain guys were told that they're not included," said Jacobs.

The 18 PBA players will be revealed on Tuesday when the Board of Governors tackles the Asiad preparation among others.

Jacobs said he had a talk with some of the aspirants but "just told them how they stood and that didn't mean you're in the 18 or where you are. It's just the situation you're into."

Some of the players Jacobs had conversed with were Barangay Ginebra's Jun Limpot and Eric Menk, Asi Taulava and Patrick Fran of Talk N Text, EJ Feihl and Boyet Fernandez of Purefoods, Red Bull's Davonn Harp and Cris Clay of the Laguna Lakers in the MBA.

After a three-week Christmas break, the tryouts will resume from Jan. 7 to Jan. 20.

Realtors near title

GAME TOMORROW (Araneta Coliseum)
6p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs San Miguel

Sta. Lucia Realty changed from sluggish to a team hell-bent on winning a championship as it repulsed San Miguel Beer, 85-71, to move a victory away from clinching the PBA Governors Cup Finals last night at the Araneta Coliseum.

Struggling and groping for form in the first half, the Realtors recovered at the start of the third quarter behind the heroics of Damien Owens, Paolo Mendoza and Dennis Espino.

Owens bounced back from a pitiable performance in Game 4, firing 13 points in the endgame to finish with 37.

LBC takes 2-0 lead over Negros

Game Tomorrow
USLS Gym (Bacolod City)
5 p.m.—Negros vs LBC Batangas

THE LBC Batangas Blades treaded the same route in beating the Negros Slashers anew last night.

They built a huge lead, wasted it and then poured on the heat down the stretch to prevail, 85-74, in Game Two and gain an imposing 2-0 lead in their MBA National Finals at the San Andres Gym in Manila.

As in Game One, the Blades took early control of the game only to yield the rein briefly to the Slashers, 71-68, in the fourth quarter.

Rather than lose their composure, however, the Blades toughened up on defense while sneaking in the points from Tonyboy Espinosa and Alex Compton to duplicate their 87-84 conquest of the Slashers Wednesday night in Lipa City.

The Blades target a sweep of the best-of-five series tomorrow when Game Three is held at the USLS Gym in Bacolod City.

With Compton at the firing end, the Blades surged to a 25-9 spread right in the first quarter and were still comfortably on top entering the fourth quarter, 68-54.

Roy Luarca

Scores:

LBC BATANGAS 85—Compton 25, Sanders 14, Adducul 12, Espinosa 10, Martin 7, Serrano 6, Laure 6, Rivera 5, Corbin 0, Ramirez 0, Cuevas 0.

NEGROS 74—Ferriols 18, Dela Rosa 11, Tierra 10, Hugnatan 10, Aldeguer 9, Bat-og 6, White 4, Benedicto 3, Madrid 3, Cardel 0, Ignacio 0, Huelar 0.

Quarters; 25-16, 45-42, 68-54, 85-74.

40 teams join AIM Masters

FORTY teams from corporate sponsors and the AIM alumni are expected to participate in The AIM Masters, the yearend invitational amateur golf tournament of the Alumni Association of the Asian Institute of Management (AAAIM) on Dec. 27 at the Langer course of the Riviera Golf and Country Club.

The AIM Masters is a milestone event for AAAIM according to Chair Laarni J. Goseco.

It is the first tournament organized by the Board and the first invitational golf competition among sponsors' teams.

The AAAIM office also provides additional information about the competition on 750-10-10 ext. 21-04 or on www.aimalumniphil.org.

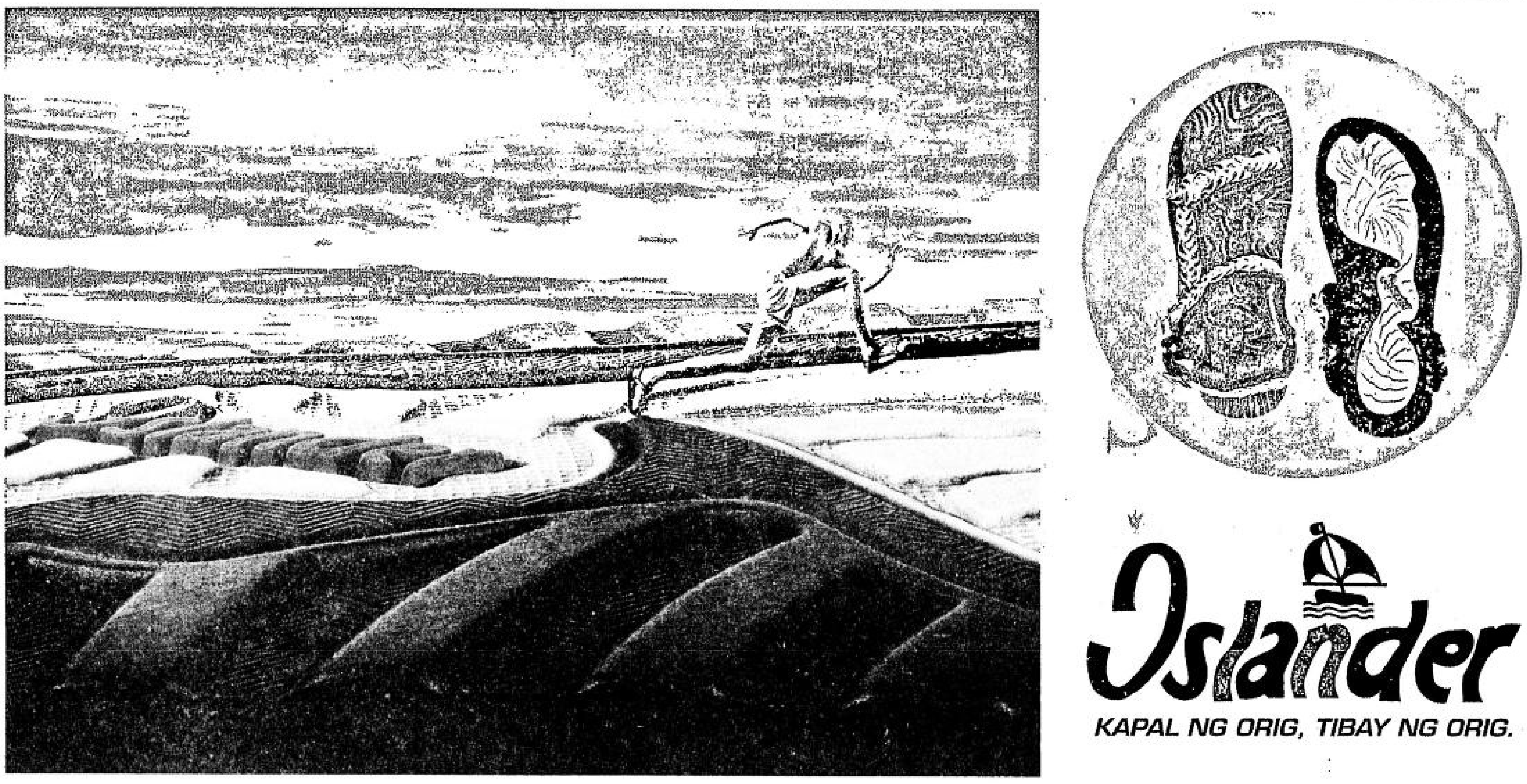
The secondary level is the individual competition among all participants.

In the team competition, players of each team will count their lowest score on every hole. The team that has the least total score after the 18th hole shall be declared The AIM Masters Team Champion and the player who returns the lowest gross score shall be declared the AIM Masters Individual Champion.

Individual net champion for the Class A, B and C Divisions will be declared using the handicap index.

Tournament tickets are available at the AAAIM Office. Each ticket covers the green fee, caddie fee, insurance fee and fellowship dinner and raffle.

Tournament tickets are available at the AAAIM Office. Each ticket covers the green fee, caddie fee, insurance fee and fellowship dinner and raffle. Special discount can be made available to alumni and senior golfers who will register before Dec. 27.



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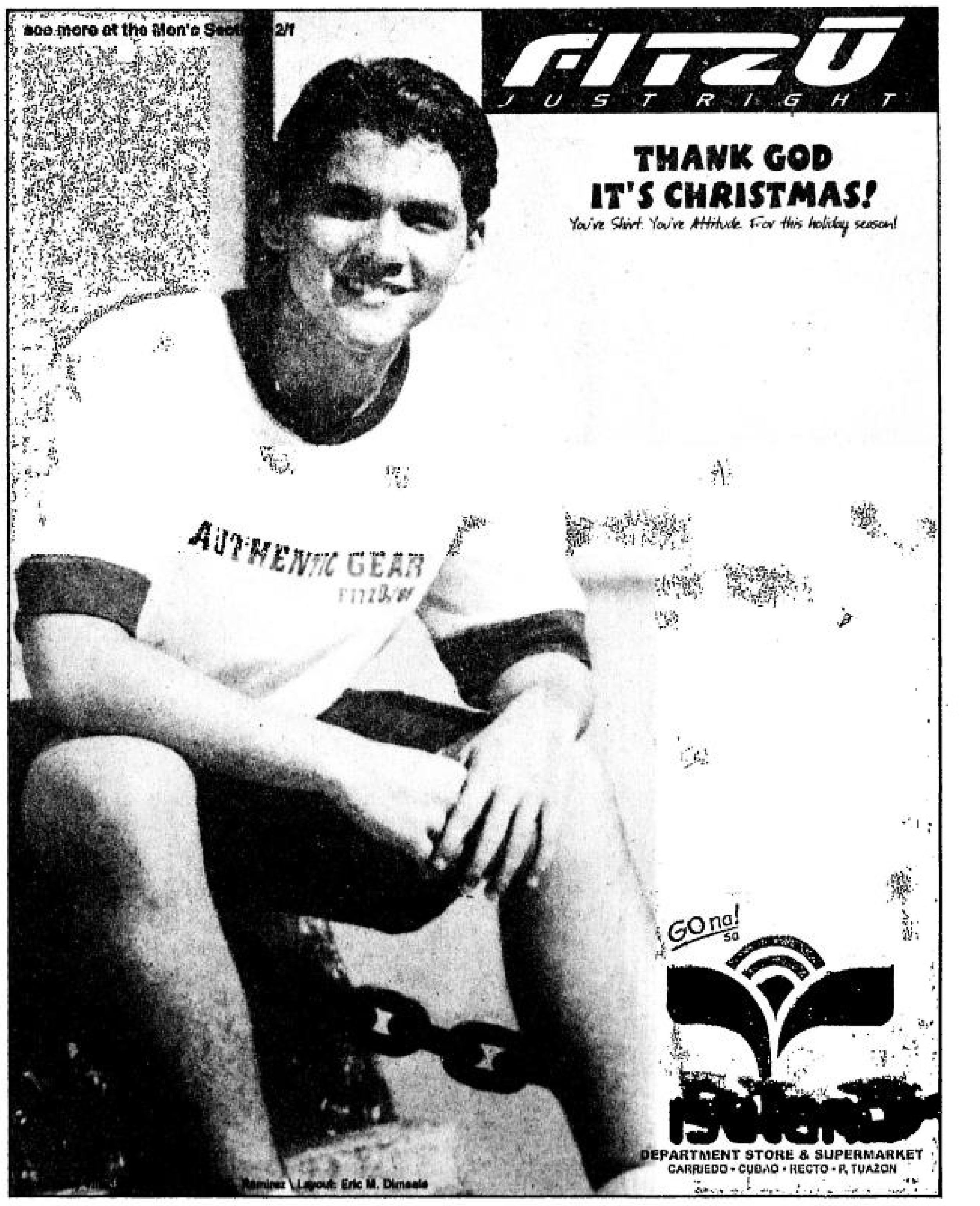

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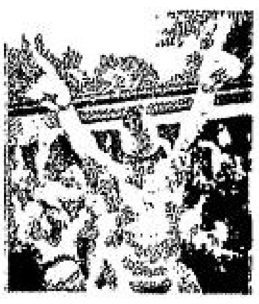
Cops hunting Korean rapist

POLICE have mounted a hunt for the leader of a South Korean syndicate operating in Manila for allegedly raping a 21-year-old tutor inside a motel in Pasay City before dawn on Sunday. Byeong Koo Lee, head of the Dajeon-Sageoin, escaped after the sexual assault and had gone into hiding. Byeong, a fugitive from South Korean law, has been charged with rape with two others before the Pasay City prosecutor's office. He is also facing a string of rape charges in Korea, police said.

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Strunk puzzles NBI A28
Naked cry against corruption A29



Two children, driver freed by kidnappers

By TJ Burgonio

TWO Chinese-Filipino youngsters and their driver were released unharmed by their Chinese kidnappers who had held them for 14 months, police said yesterday.

Jasmin Cua, 13, her brother John Christian, 11, and their driver, Benito de la Cruz, 30, were freed shortly before midnight Tuesday near a park in Tagaytay City, said police chief Sheldon Jacaban.

Jacaban said there were three children originally abducted in Quezon City, but one had been set free earlier.

Michael Cua, the children's father, told investigators the family did not pay ransom.

But the INQUIRER learned the Cua family had paid more than P5 million for the release of the three youngsters as early as September but the kidnappers decided to free only Jovy.

"The kidnappers kept the two other children so they could demand additional ransom money from the family," a reliable source bared. "Eventually they were convinced that the family had no more money to cough up so they released them."

Teresita Ang-See of the Citizens' Action Against Crime greeted the Cua children's release with relief.

"We're very happy for them," she said. "At least they're back with their family this Christmas. We've been helping the family locate the children."

Ang-See, however, said the Cua children could hardly walk after being "confined inside the kidnappers' safehouse for 14 months."

Police in Region 4 initially reported that the two Cua children and their driver had escaped from their kidnappers around 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday in Barangay Dapdap in Tagaytay.

They could not however provide details of the escape except to say that the three managed to flee from their abductors until they reached People's Park in the Sky and Tagaytay Highlands.

The three Cua siblings and their driver were snatched by three unidentified persons on Oct. 2, 2000 in San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City.

A police official, who asked not to be identified, said it was their father, Michael, not the Cua children, who was the original target of the kidnappers.

It just happened that on the day of the kidnapping, the children were forced to ride their father's car, the official said.

He added this was not a simple case of kidnapping, noting that the kidnapers had an axe to grind against the elder Cua.

The freed driver told police they were blindfolded, handcuffed and were brought to an undisclosed place following their kidnapping.

They were transferred from house to house at least ten times during their captivity.

The victims said they had been kept in decent air-conditioned rooms, fed well and given clothes, but were ordered not to look at the faces of their abductors. *With a report from Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau, Associated Press*

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Festival Supermall	December 7-9, 14-16, 21-25	1:00-5:00pm
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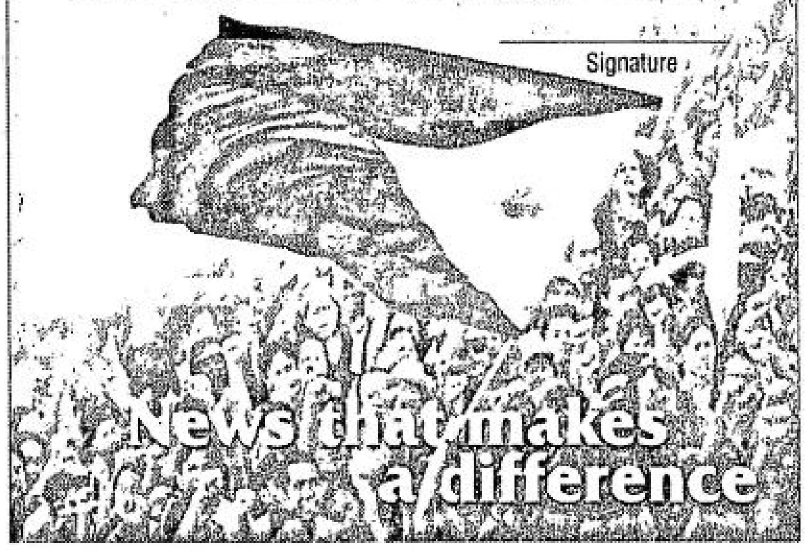
News that makes a difference

Desierto's case dead in the water

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE IMPEACHMENT case against Ombudsman Aniano Desierto can never reach the House of Representatives. It's dead in the water before it can take off.

Why? Because most congressmen don't believe that Desierto would be so cheap as to accept a camera and P400,000 in consideration for the dropping of a case against a banker, Luke Roxas.

The bribery case against the controversial Ombudsman is harassment, pure and simple.

***

Okay, granting that indeed there was haggling for the amount to be given as bribe to Desierto and that the haggling was recorded on tape. Still, that doesn't prove anything.

Desierto's voice was not in the tape. What was recorded is a conversation between lawyer Ernesto Francisco and banker Roxas.

In the tape, Roxas told Francisco that he haggled with Desierto's aide for the lowering of the bribe money from P500,000 to P400,000.

***

The supposed Desierto aide was Fernando Timbol, a freelance cameraman who helped the Ombudsman in his media affairs.

Most probably, Timbol negotiated with Roxas without Desierto's knowledge. Some enterprising aides use their bosses' name in illegal transactions without the poor guys anything the wiser for it.

Ginamit ni Timbol *ang kanyang amo*. Some of my friends who hold important positions in government were, at one time or another, victims of namedropping by their subordinates.

***

Most of my lawyer friends tell me that Francisco's career as a lawyer is finished.

"Who would trust a lawyer who breaks a lawyer-client relationship by revealing his conversations with the client to the public?" said my friend Vince, who's active in his law practice.

"A lawyer who divulges what his client told him in private is stupid," said Greg, another lawyer friend.

You'll be surprised to hear of some very intelligent people who don't use their head.

***

When so-called civil society leader Linda O. Montayre denounced First Gentleman Mike Arroyo for allegedly protecting a smuggled rice shipment being held by the Bureau of Customs, she did not take back her word after it was proven that she was wrong.

It turned out that some guys dropped Arroyo's name in lobbying for the release of the smuggled shipment.

When the First Gentleman learned about this, he called up customs officials and asked that they seize the shipment pronto. He denied that he had anything to do with the shipment. Customs official promptly ordered the shipment seized.

***

Some public figures have the notion that when they publicly apologize for their mistake they will lose credibility.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. When you admit you were wrong and apologize, your credibility with the public is enhanced even more.

However, only a few people will publicly admit their mistakes. It takes a lot of courage to do that.

***

The standoff at the Subic Freeport customshouse continues.

Subic Port Collector Billy Bibit is holding on to his post after he was ordered by his superiors in Manila to vacate it and move over to the Clark customs office.

The Subic customshouse now has two collectors: Bibit and Felipe Bartolome, who was sent as Bibit's replacement. Bartolome holds office at one of the hotels within the Subic Bay economic zone; Bibit has locked up the Subic customs collector's office.

***

How come some customs officials assigned outside Manila are running wild and don't seem to give a damn about their superiors in Manila?

Another customs official gone wild is Lourdes Mangawang, collector at the Zamboanga City port.

Mangawang was told by the Manila customs legal office that the chemical shipment from Malaysia that was consigned to businessman Lepeng Wee did not contain ingredients to produce *shabu* or methamphetamine hydrochloride.

***

The customs legal office's memorandum to Mangawang cleared Wee of drug smuggling.

But Mangawang continues to harass Wee, apparently upon instructions of Mayor Maria Clara Lobregat and her son Congressman Celso Lobregat. The Lobregats are Wee's political enemy.

The Department of Justice recently dropped smuggling charges against Wee filed by Mangawang.

***

When she learned of Wee's exoneration by the justice department, Mangawang went to Davao City to file an administrative case against Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuno for dismissing the case.

She's bent on sending the apparently innocent Wee to prison.

Mangawang's behavior toward Wee seems to have no rhyme or reason. That is, if nobody is holding her like a puppet on strings for some considerations.

Wee was one of those who lobbied with then Customs Commissioner Nelson Tan, his *kababayan*, for the transfer of Mangawang to the Zamboanga City port. Before her present assignment, Mangawang was a legal officer at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport customs office.

In the first few days that Mangawang assumed her customs post in Zamboanga City, she stayed at the house of Wee and his wife, Araceli.

When the Wees think of Mangawang these days, they imagine a snake. This reptile bites that hand that feeds it.

Family feud causes big fire in Parañaque

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA

A NASTY fight between a couple was believed to have ignited a fire that left over 600 families homeless in Parañaque on Thursday. Damage was estimated at P60 million.

Authorities were yesterday looking for a Rodolfo "Boy" Barrandes, his wife and their two neighbors to shed light on the cause of fire that also razed several commercial establishments in Barangays Tambo and Don Galo.

Residents claimed that the fire began at the shanty owned by the Barrandes. The woman of the house hurled a lamp at the husband at the height of an argument about 4 p.m. on Thursday.

FO1 Cristobal Maynes said the fire immediately spread to nearby houses along the creek in Tambo.

Fire authorities declared a general alarm at 4:42 p.m. as flames began to engulf structures in nearby Don Galo.

Fire trucks from all over Metro Manila and Chinese volunteer firemen rushed to the scene, but there was very little left to save especially in the Riverside portion of Tambo.

Fire fighters could not easily penetrate the area because of narrow streets clogged by panicking residents rushing to save whatever they could.

A number of residents, most of them old timers, passed out at the sight of the huge fire.

SFO1 Mario Agustin, FO2 Reynante Esquillo, and fire volunteer Timothy Dy suffered minor injuries while trying to douse the flames. Authorities finally put out the fire at 8:30 p.m.

Parañaque Mayor Joey Marquez described the fire as the worse blaze to hit the city in recent memory.

Man burned beyond recognition

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA

A MAN identified as an employee of a softdrinks company was scorched to death when his delivery van went up in smoke in Parañaque City early yesterday morning.

Michael Yaptinchay, 29, said to be a dealer development coordinator of Coca-Cola Bottlers' Philippines Inc., was burned beyond recognition, said FO1 Cristobal Maynes.

But Coca-Cola executives refused to confirm that the body found inside a brown Daihatsu van with plate number UMA-586 was Yaptinchay's since it was burned beyond recognition.

As of yesterday afternoon, Yaptinchay had not yet reported to the Coca-Cola bottling plant in Otis, Manila.

Yaptinchay has been connected with the softdrink bottlers for seven years and has no known enemies, a firm spokesman said.

Yaptinchay's service vehicle was found burning about 6 a.m. in front of Astra Pharmaceutical on South Luzon Expressway, said Manny Prades of the Philippine National Construction Corp.

Police said authorities doused the flames and found a body, scorched beyond recognition, inside the van. But they could not yet determine what caused the fire, even as they suspect that the man killed in the blaze was a victim of foul play.

Police are also looking into the possibility that the victim was killed before his body was placed inside the van, which was then set on fire.

The body was brought to the Philippine National Police for autopsy.

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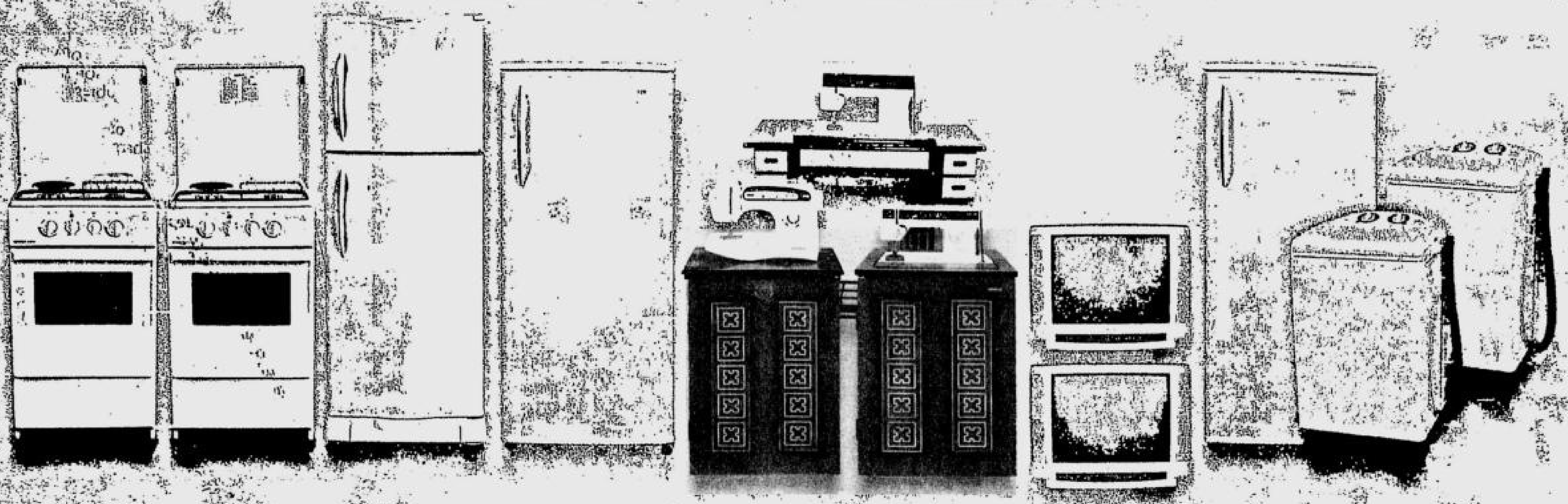

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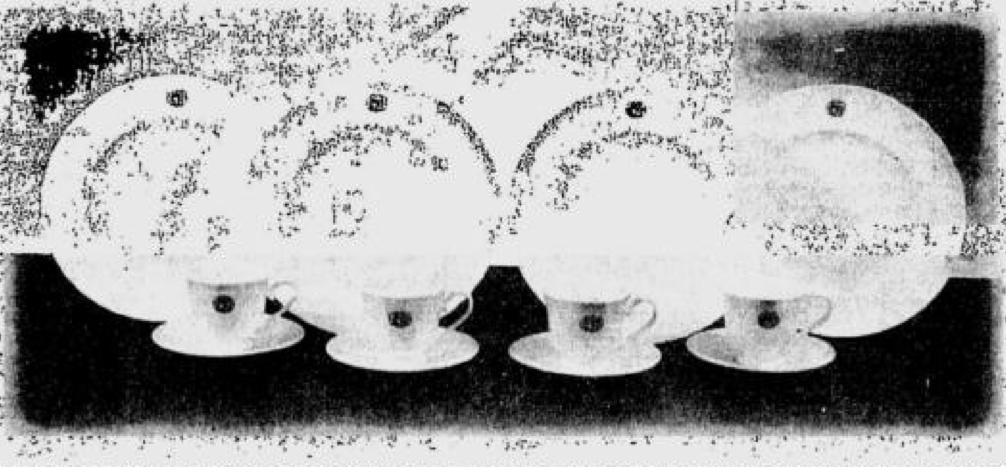

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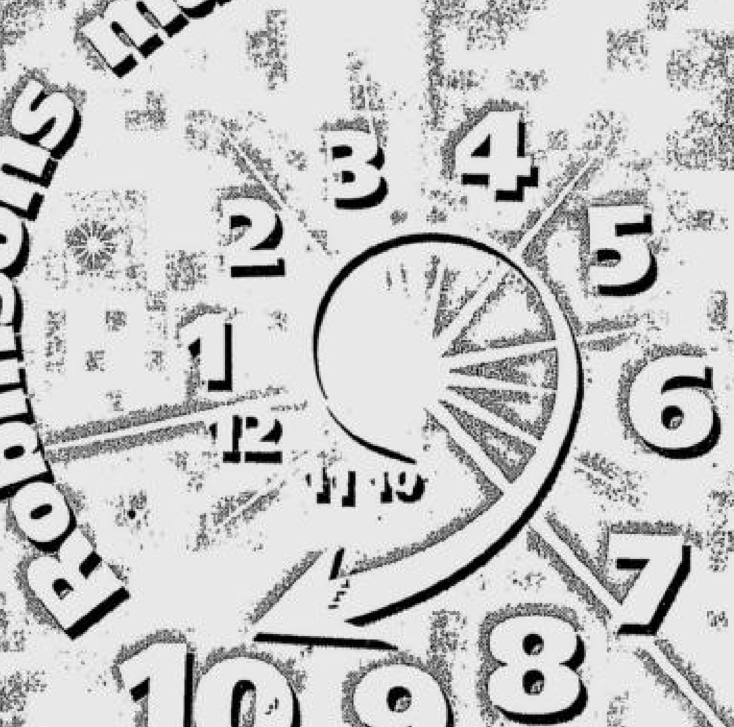

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December 31	10AM - 8PM			10AM - 9PM
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Strunk puzzles NBI

By Philip C. Tubeza

IS ROD Lauren Strunk withholding information in the investigation of his wife's murder, actress Nida Blanca?

National Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco said the bureau is wondering why Strunk is not "bullish" or "enthusiastic" in shedding light over the murder of his wife. Wycoco also noted that throughout Strunk's 13-hour interview, his lawyers spoke most of the time.

"The normal or expected attitude or behavior of a victim's husband or next of kin is to be very enthusiastic for the case to be solved," Wycoco said.

He added that more than anything, "(Rod) should be the one interested in the case."

"We do not expect him to stonewall the investigation or refuse the polygraph (exam)," Wycoco observed.

The NBI chief said there were "many inconsistencies" in Strunk's 12-page affidavit.

Blanca's husband is set to take the lie-detector test today.

"If (the inconsistencies) are not clarified, then we will (really) have doubts," he said, adding that Strunk remains a suspect in the killing.

Wycoco also noted how Strunk's lawyers frequently intervened during the questioning.

"There were many inconsistencies and most (of the time), his lawyers gave the answers, which I think should be corrected," Wycoco said.

He added while a person is entitled to a lawyer, that lawyer should only give advice, not do most of the talking.

"Otherwise, (it would be) the lawyers (who) should undergo the polygraph test," Wycoco said.

Wycoco said the bureau will conduct a parallel investigation of Mike Martinez's disappearance, after the victim's family asked the NBI to take over from the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (Naktaf).

He died working overtime to earn more for Christmas

CONSTRUCTION worker Alex Gomisong, 34, went on overtime Thursday night to earn extra money this Christmas at a Manila skyscraper being built.

But tragedy struck after he slipped from the 31st floor of the building and fell 20 floors down to his death.

Gomisong, 34, died due to severe head and body injuries after the tragedy at the Embassy Pointe Tower at the corner of Padre Faura and Roxas Boulevard, said investigator SPO1 Diomedes Labarda, of the Western Police District-homicide section.

The accident happened around 8 p.m. Thursday while Gomisong was working overtime with his colleagues, Tirso Barroro and Jessie Aramez, on the 31st floor.

The victim's colleagues brought Gomisong to the Ospital ng Maynila but he was declared dead on arrival.

Philip Tubeza

Get to know Your Ham

CHRISTMAS hams are getting segmented as consumers become more discriminating in their buying habits and usage of the holiday staple. Ham makers have developed several ham types to address this need.

A trade survey conducted among retailers and consumers reveal that at least five types of Christmas ham, classified according to shape and processing technology, are sold in the market today.

The traditional ham, which is made from whole pork muscle, comes in deboned and bone-intact forms. This type is considered as the premium segment because of its good looks, lean meat, and savory taste. It fetches a price range of P249 to P260 per kilo.

The deboned type or commonly called "Holiday Ham" is the most sought-after Christmas ham offering, accounting for more than half of the trade, according to the survey, eating up a big chunk of the corporate market. Companies prefer this type for gift-giving to clients and business associates.

The bone-in type of the whole muscle ham category, commonly called "Chinese Ham" requires a more tedious preparation compared to the holiday ham. This old-time Oriental favorite is cured longer with herbs and spices to bring out an extraordinary flavor. It is even more expensive, at P345 to P380 a kilo.

Another category which requires a special mold is the structured ham. Structured hams come in different names as the shape of the meat product implies. Consumers generically identify these hams as pear-shaped, square, and round-shaped or hamon de bola.

The structured hams offer more flexibility in weight range specification and are retailed in more affordable prices ranging from P139 to P185 per piece.

"The idea of producing more ham variants is to cater to consumers having different budgets to enjoy the Christmas staple," said a meat processor.

"Some people want their ham in pear-shape some prefer the square type while others opt for the hamon de bola specially during the New Year's eve" she added.

A lady politician said she bought a few boxes of holiday ham for her noche buena and had 50 boxes of hamon de bola as gift to her Chinese friends.

"My Chinese friends are fond of round-shaped hams because they represent prosperity and good luck," she said.

A school teacher, who augments her income by selling processed meats, said orders of pear-shaped ham usually pile up during the first week of December.

"This is the time that teachers get their 13th month pay and other incentives," she said.

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UP OBLATION RUN

Naked cry against corruption

BY AGNES E. DONATO

WHAT could be a bolder, louder call for transparency in government than a bunch of men running around, yes, naked?

They made the "boldest" move against the Estrada administration last year.

Yesterday, members of the Alpha Phi Omega (APO) of the University of the Philippines drummed a campaign against corruption as its theme for the annual Oblation Run.

With only their faces covered, 16 APO frat members squeezed through thousands of screaming female and male students inside the Palma Hall in UP Diliman.

The fraternity dubbed the theme for this year's Oblation Run "Walang Ku-Corrupt," which was also the name of a non-government organization fighting against corruption in government.

Vip Atienza, APO member and project coordination of the run, explained that the theme was "in continuance with last year's Erap Resign call."

"What we need in politics right now is transparency," said Atienza, urging government officials to bare their transactions and operations before the public.

"The protest for good governance did not end with the ouster of President Estrada," Atienza stressed.

"What we're trying to do here is to remind the people that we should stay vigilant because there is still corruption even in our new government," the fraternity man added.

The Oblation Run started as a publicity stunt for the satirical play "Ang Hubad na Bayani" which the APO Fraternity staged in the late 1970s to deride the Marcos administration.

From then on, the run became an annual event for APO members and a UP tradition as well, with the fraternity highlighting different social and political issues every year.

Aside from the anti-corruption campaign, this year's run also projected the UP students' fight for greater state subsidy.

There was a bigger number of runners last year.

But Atienza observed that "the crowd (seemed to have) enjoyed it more" this year.

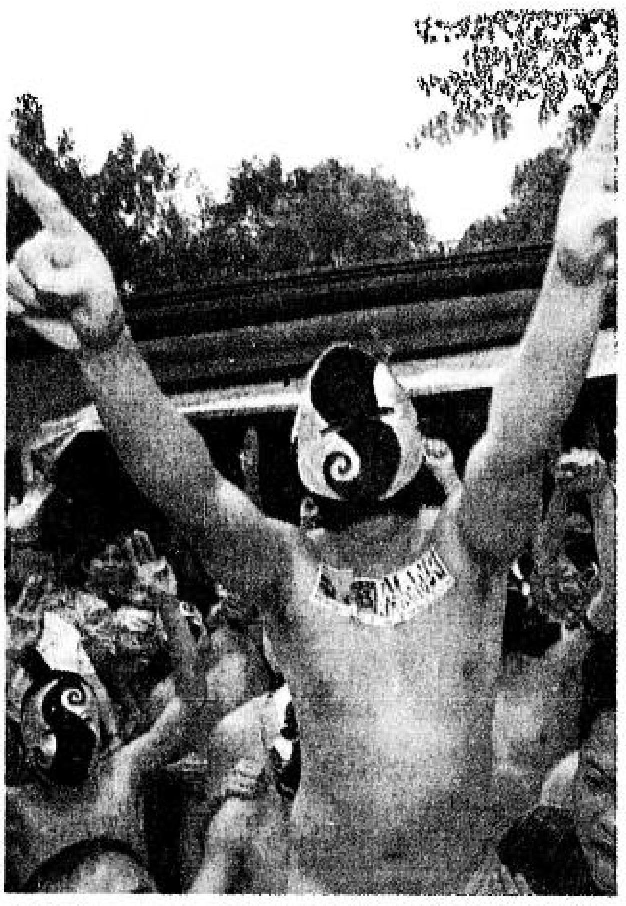
He disclosed that the APO fraternity never had any difficulty convincing its members to take off their clothes and participate in the Oblation Run.

"Actually, we have difficulty trying to limit the number of runners," Atienza said half-jokingly. "If you come to think about it, not very many students could have the chance to run naked inside a university building amid thousands of screaming women, with the media covering the event."

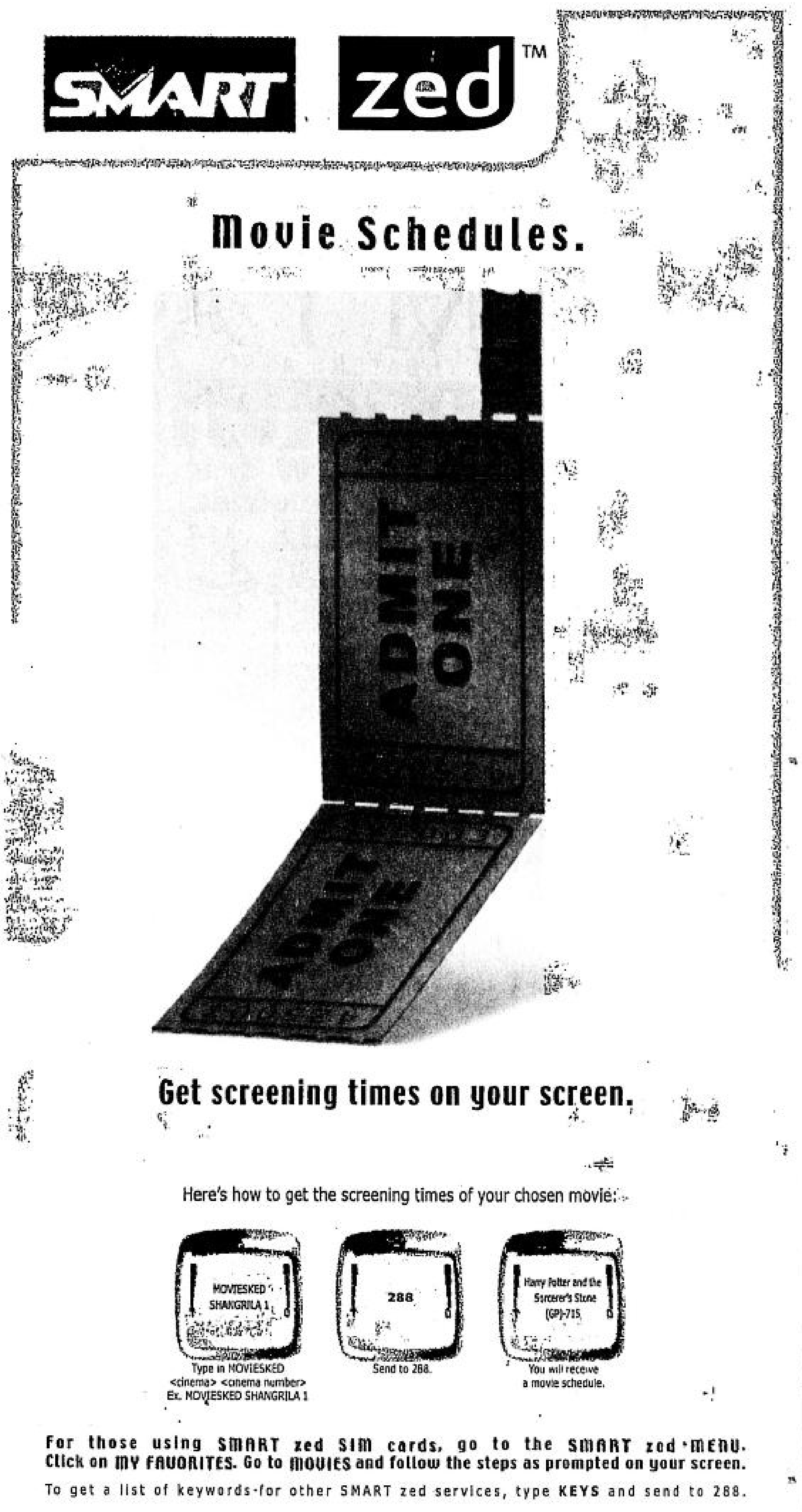
During yesterday's event, however, the APO members sent not only the women, but also men, screaming and elbowing their way to a better view, as soon as the runners came out of the van that dropped them in front of the Palma Hall steps.

One female freshman, out there to witness her first Oblation Run, yesterday said she was "very flattered" after one of the naked runners paused and handed her a rose.

Asked why he came the to see the naked men, one male student flatly replied: "To compare notes, what else?"


DENNIS SABANGAN

APO fratmen bare all to denounce corruption.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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, December 15, 2001
2nd Week of Advent

1st Reading:	*Sir 48:1-4, 9-11*
Gospel:	*Mt 17:10-13*

As they were coming down the mountainside, the disciples then asked Jesus, "Why do the teachers of the Law say that Elijah must come first?" And Jesus answered, "So it is: first comes Elijah to set everything as it has to be. But I tell you, Elijah has already come and they did not recognize him, but treated him as they pleased. And they will also make the Son of Man suffer."

Then the disciples understood that Jesus was referring to John the Baptist.

Commentary:

The problem faced by God's messengers is for people to "recognize" them. Maybe it's because they have disguised themselves a lot. Or perhaps we have already formed a fixed idea of the way they should act, dress and speak and we ask the Lord to mold his messengers in accordance with our thinking. The question of "recognition" is so difficult we end up thinking of them as messengers of exactly the opposite. That is to say, not God's messengers but the devil's. And filled with a strong sense of justice, we spare humanity from their presence and influence. Wouldn't it be easier to change our perception of God? After all, we have already erred a lot on the matter of "recognition."

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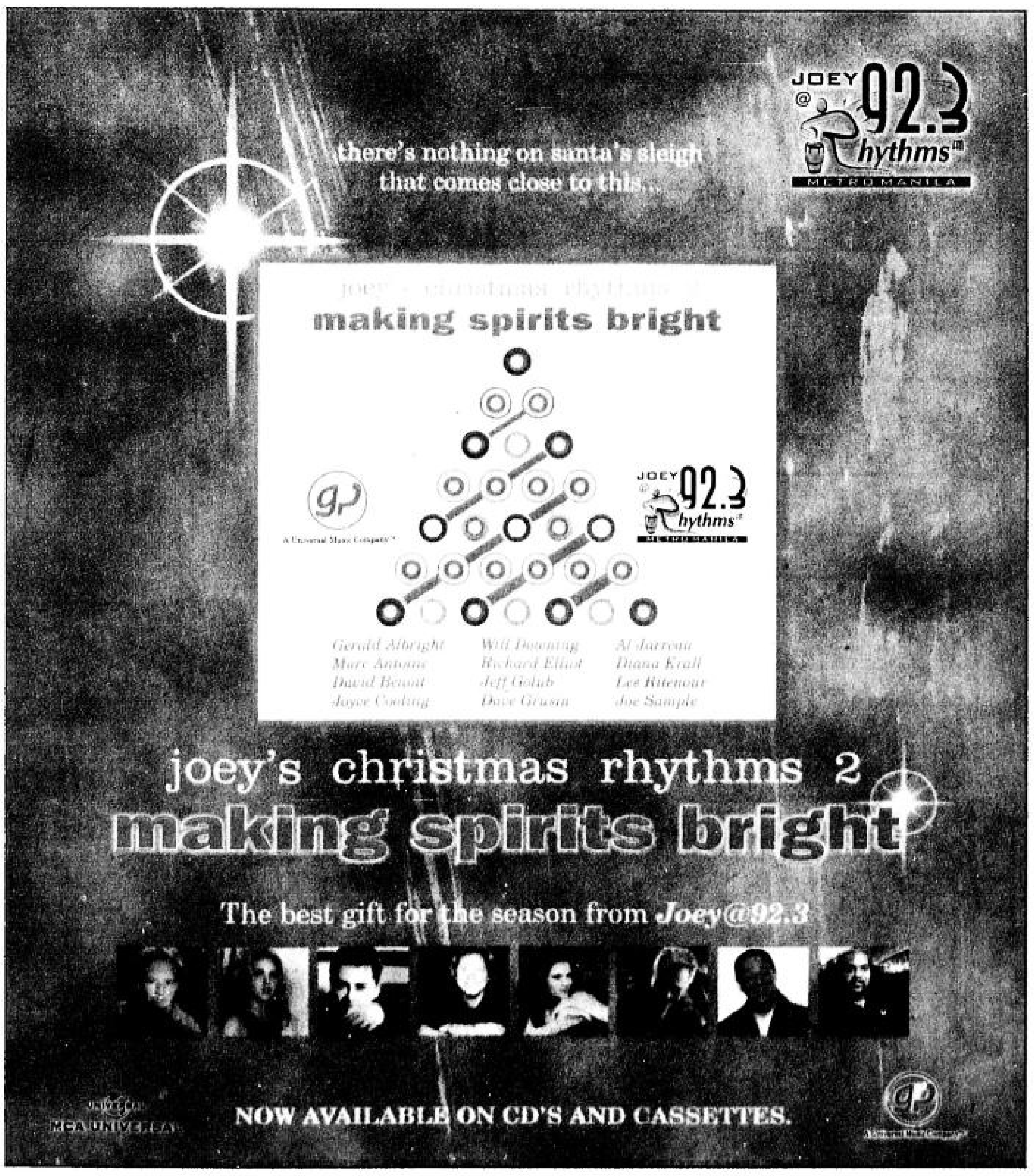
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SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 633-9999

NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR 4173888

1	SUMMER CATCH
2	MUSKETEER
3	HARRY POTTER
4	EARTHQUAKE
5	THE SCORE
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
8	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE

SM CENTERPOINT 7149532-7161416

1	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
2	THE SCORE
3	SUMMER CATCH
4	EARTHQUAKE
5	HARRY POTTER
6	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
7	MUSKETEER
8	MONSTERS, INC
9	ROCKSTAR
10	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 9350749

1	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
2	ROCKSTAR
3	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
4	HARRY POTTER
5	MUSKETEER
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7	SUMMER CATCH
8	THE SCORE
9	EARTHQUAKE
10	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
11	MONSTERS, INC
12	MARKOVA (RI)

SM CITY MANILA 5238240

1	MONSTERS, INC
2	MUSKETEER
3	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
4	SUMMER CATCH
5	ROCKSTAR
6	HARRY POTTER
7	SERENDIPITY
8	THE SCORE
9	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
10	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
11	EARTHQUAKE
12	MARKOVA (RI)

SM MEGAMALL 6331601 • 6329401

1	ROCKSTAR
2	MONSTERS, INC
3	HARRY POTTER
4	SUMMER CATCH
5	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
6	THE SCORE
7	DREAMGIRL
8	EARTHQUAKE
9	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
10	MUSKETEER
11	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
12	MARKOVA (RI)

SM TUTUBAN 2514302

1	SUMMER CATCH
2	EARTHQUAKE
3	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
4	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT

dts DIGITAL SOUND · DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND·EX

SM CITY NORTH EDSA 9296452

1	MARKOVA (RI)
2	MUSKETEER
3	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	EARTHQUAKE
6	HARRY POTTER
7	SUMMER CATCH
8	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
9	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
10	THE SCORE
11	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
12	MONSTERS, INC

SM SOUTHMALL 8066888

1	EARTHQUAKE
2	THE SCORE
3	HARRY POTTER
4	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
5	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
6	MONSTERS, INC
7	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
8	SUMMER CATCH
9	MUSKETEER
10	MARKOVA (RI)

SM GUADALUPE COMM'L 8820965

1	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
2	2 PISNGI NG LANGIT
3	EARTHQUAKE

SM CEBU 2313806

1	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
2	HARRY POTTER
3	JOY RIDE
4	GLITTER
5	KAPITAN AMBO
6	JEEPERS CREEPERS
7	THE SCORE

SM ILOILO 3209422

1	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
2	CLOSED
3	THE SCORE
4	JOY RIDE
5	JEEPERS CREEPERS
6	GLITTER
7	CLOSED
8	HARRY POTTER

SM PAMPANGA 7128015

1	HARRY POTTER
2	JOY RIDE
3	MUSKETEER
4	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
5	TIKIM
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

SM SUCAT 8294915

1	SUMMER CATCH
2	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
3	HARRY POTTER
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

SM DAVAO

1	HARRY POTTER
2	13 DAYS
3	BUBBLE BOY
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	IRON LADIES
6	JEEPERS CREEPERS

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

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GLORIETTA 1 (formerly QUAD)

1	SUMMER CATCH	In SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
2	EARTHQUAKE	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	HARRY POTTER	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	THE MUSKETEER	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GLORIETTA 4

1	MONSTERS, INC.	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	THE SCORE	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	SUMMER CATCH (THX)	In DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	CINEMANILA (Art Film)	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	MVP: MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
6	HARRY POTTER	In DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
7	ROCKSTAR	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GREENBELT

1	CINEMANILA	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	SUMMER CATCH	In SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
3	CINEMANILA	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	REGINE AT THE MOVIES DEC. 15, 18, 21, 22, 28, 29, 30 (Onstage)	

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1	SUMMER CATCH (THX)	In DSD/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
2	MVP: MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	THE SCORE	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	MONSTERS, INC.	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	HARRY POTTER	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

MMTA

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DCS)	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
2 (SDDS)	MONSTER, INC.
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4 GOLD (DTS)	ROCKSTAR
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	THE SCORE
6 GOLD (SDDS)	SUMMER CATCH
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	MUSKETEER
8	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
9	EARTHQUAKE
10	WOLF GIRL

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	
2	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3 (DTS)	DREAM GIRL
4	
5	
6 (DTS)	ROCKSTAR

Golden Pearl THX

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 831.6603

1	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
3	TALONG

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	WOLF GIRL
3	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MUSKETEER
5	TALONG

METROPOLIS star
543.3927 loc. 150

1	EARTHQUAKE
2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
3	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	HARRY POTTER
6	SUMMER CATCH
7	RESERVE
8	RESERVE

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) tel 751.2011 to13

1	SUMMER CATCH

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	HARRY POTTER

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515

1	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
2	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3	REPLICANT

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
A	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	ARAYYY
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	
4	

GOTESCO CINEMA

City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (DOLBY)	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
2	
3	
4	MUSKETEER
5	EARTHQUAKE
6	WOLF GIRL
7 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
8 (SDDS)	SUMMER CATCH
9 (DOLBY)	MVP

Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	WOLF GIRL
3	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
4 (SDDS)	SUMMER CATCH
5	MUSKETEER
6 (DOLBY)	EARTHQUAKE
7 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
8	MVP
9	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	SUMMER CATCH
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
4	EARTHQUAKE
5 (SDDS)	WOLF GIRL
6	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
7 (DOLBY)	HARRY POTTER
8	RESERVE

Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
5 (SDDS)	MVP

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson
Lords
Jennet

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	OPENS DEC. 25, 2001
2	OPENS DEC. 25, 2001
3	OPENS DEC. 25, 2001

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

3	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3	RESERVE
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE

New Divisoria Mall
DIVISORIA CINEMA
tel 244.4619

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
3	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE
6	TALONG

Baclaran LRT
LRT CINEMA
tel 512.0115

1 (DOLBY)	
2	

Berma
tel 879.2029

1	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
2	SUMMER CATCH

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	ROCKSTAR
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	DREAM GIRL
2 (DTS)	ROCKSTAR
3 (DOLBY)	HARRY POTTER
4	JOY RIDE

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	JEEPERS CREEPERS
2 (DOLBY)	ROCKSTAR
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4	JOY RIDE

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	HARRY POTTER
2	WEYT A MINIT
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MovieTown
(Tarlac)

1	MONSTERS, INC
2	KAPITAN AMBO
3 (DOLBY)	KING OF GLADIATORS
4 (DTS)	JOY RIDE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	EARTHQUAKE
2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
3	DALAWANG PISNGI NG LANGIT
4 (DTS)	TALONG

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	ROCKSTAR
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3 (DTS)	JOY RIDE
4	TALONG
5	KUMAKASA PUMUPUTOK

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	TALONG
2	ROCKSTAR
3	JEEPERS CREEPERS

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2558

1	HARRY POTTER
2	ROCKSTAR
3	IRON LADY

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	KAPITAN AMBO
2	TIKIM
3	THE BODY

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	ROCKSTAR
2	JOY RIDE
3	IRON LADY

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	HAYOP SA SEX APPEAL
2 (DTS)	

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	KUMAKASA PUMUPUTOK
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	HARRY POTTER

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	KAPITAN AMBO
2	JOY RIDE
3	MONSTERS, INC
4	TIKIM

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

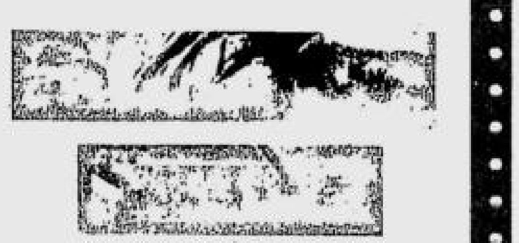
1 (DOLBY EX)	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
2	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
3	DON'T SAY A WORD
4 (DTS EX)	KAPITAN AMBO

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

CMG INTERNATIONAL

PREMIERE CINEMA THX NOW SHOWING



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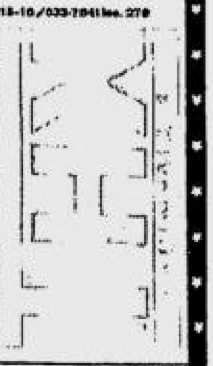
NOW SHOWING

e-mail : htc@netasia-mnl.net
http://www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

GALLERIA 632-9118-16 / 633-7841 loc. 279

1	HARRY POTTER
2	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
3	THE SCORE
4	ROCKSTAR
5	SUMMER CATCH
6	EARTHQUAKE
7	PISNGI
8	MUSKETEER
9	MONSTERS, INC.
10	WOLF GIRL



ERMITA 536-7809 TO 1/3

1	SUMMER CATCH
2	WOLF GIRL
3	EARTHQUAKE
4	THE SCORE
5	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
6	HARRY POTTER
7	MUSKETEER

METRO EAST 632-9118-16 / 633-7841

1	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
2	HARRY POTTER
3	THE SCORE
4	MONSTERS, INC.
5	MUSKETEER
6	WOLF GIRL
7	SUMMER CATCH
8	PISNGI

NOVALICHES 936-3229 TO 31

1	EARTHQUAKE
2	WOLF GIRL
3	SUMMER CATCH
4	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
5	ROCKSTAR
6	MUSKETEER
7	HARRY POTTER
8	MONSTERS, INC.

IMUS (046) 471-9188

1	HARRY POTTER
2	EARTHQUAKE
3	SUMMER CATCH
4	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
5	PISNGI
6	MUSKETEER

BACOLOD (034) 441-0483 / 0489

1	DON'T SAY A WORD
2	CAPT. CORRELLI'S
3	KING OF GLADIATORS
4	GLITTER
5	HARRY POTTER
6	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO

ILOILO (033) 330-9077 / 8078

1	HARRY POTTER
2	JOY RIDE
3	JEEPERS CREEPERS
4	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
5	HARRY POTTER
6	JEEPERS CREEPERS

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101

ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	SUTLA (RE-ISSUE)
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	MUSKETEER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	HARRY POTTER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	EARTHQUAKE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	MVP
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	SUMMER CATCH
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	PISNGI
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	MARITAL RAPE / EROTIC DIARIES
ODEON	EARTHQUAKE
ODEON-2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
ROBEN	PISNGI
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	PUKYUTAN / STORY OF US
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
REMAR	PISNGI
REMAR-2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	DALAWANG PISNGI
B	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
C	SUTLA (RI)
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-2	SUMMER CATCH
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	ROCKSTAR
CINEMA-2	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT
CINEMA-3	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	THE SCORE
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	MONSTER, INC.
CINEMA-6	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
CINEMA-7	SUTLA (RI)
CINEMA-8	PISNGI
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SUMMER CATCH
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	EARTHQUAKE
CINEMA-12	MOST VALUABLE PRIMATE
CINEMA-14	MUSKETEER
CINEMA-15	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	THE MUSKETEER
CINEMA-2	MONSTERS, INC.
CINEMA-3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-4	SUMMER CATCH
CINEMA-5	SERENDIPITY
CINEMA-6	THE SCORE
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PIÑAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

Beware: Yuletide con men on the prowl

NESTLE warned the public about a group of swindlers who prey on unsuspecting consumers using the ongoing promotions of Bear Brand, Milo, Nescafe and Nestle Family Breakaway.

Company officials alerted the police about the syndicate, after they received reports from consumers who have been duped recently.

The consumers called Nestle to ask about their prizes, after they were advised that they won in a Nestle Raffle Draw.

According to reports, someone called the consumers on the phone and said that for them to claim their prizes, they must first deposit an amount, from P6,000 to P20,000, as "processing and validation fee" and then provide the caller with the bank's name, branch, and deposit account number.

The "winners" were also advised to send their ID photos and copies of certain documents to the Nestle office in Rockwell Center, Makati City.

The caller used different names in each of the reported incidents. The names could be fictitious or, if existing, may have been used without authority. Nestle warned other names may also be used by the syndicate to cheat more consumers.

Nestle said the standard procedure is for the company to notify winners via telegram, asking them to contact the Nestle sales office in their area.

Nestle said it does not require winners to pay any amount for processing and validation nor make any deposit in any bank.

Consumers who received similar or suspicious calls about Nestle promotions are advised to call the Nestle Consumer Services hotline at telephone number 898-0061 to verify the information.

2,000 VCDs seized

AUTHORITIES confiscated a total of 2,269 pirated video compact discs in two simultaneous operations in Manila.

Members of the Department of Interior and Local Government's Special Operations Group Jericho conducted raids on Quezon Boulevard in Quiapo and the Tutuban Center Mall near the Divisoria Market.

In a report to DILG Secretary Joey Lina, SOG Jericho chief P/Sr. Supt. Pedro U. Tango said his men received a report that pirated and pornographic VCDs were being peddled on the streets of Quiapo and Tutuban.

Tango then sent two teams under Inspectors Jethro Jakon Lim and Joselito Savares to conduct operations in the areas in coordination with Videogram Regulatory Board personnel.

1,000 phone lines go dead

AROUND 1,000 telephone lines in parts of Pasay and Makati cities went out of order recently due to major cable trouble, according to PLDT.

The telephones, whose numbers start with 831, 832, 833, 834, 804, 550 and 551, are located in barangays Malibay, Maricaban and Pinagbarilan in Pasay City and Barangay Bangkal in Makati City.

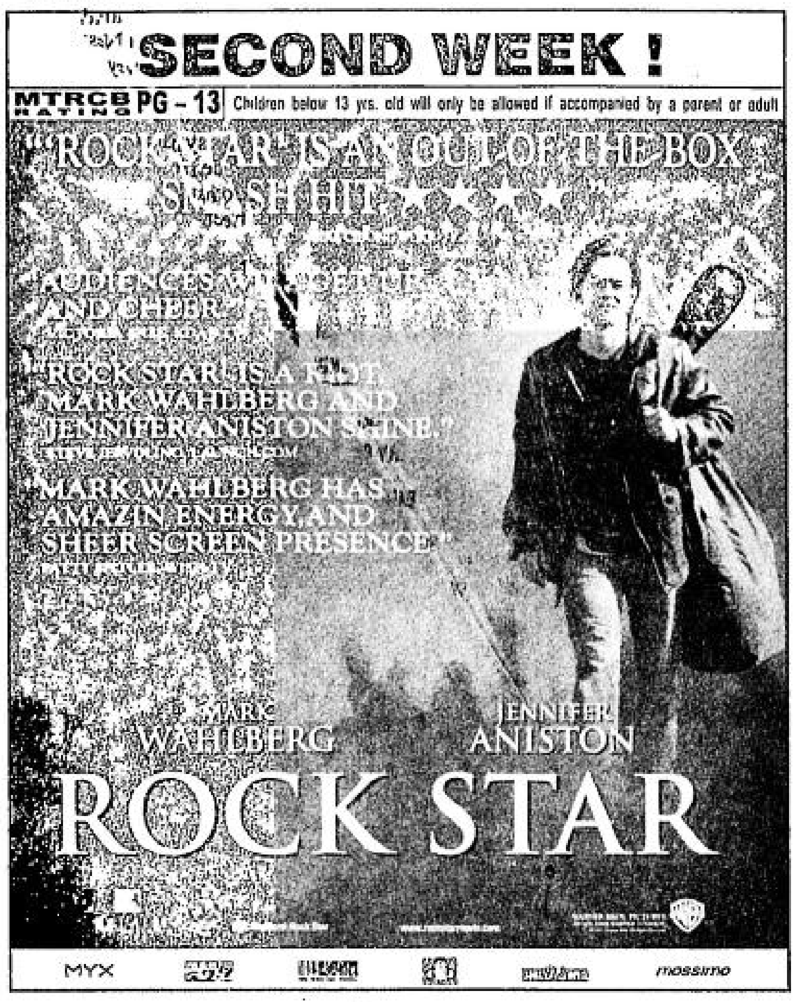
PLDT said its underground cables on Edsa corner Taft Avenue were accidentally hit by a contractor of the Department of Public Works and Highways working in that area which caused the cable trouble.

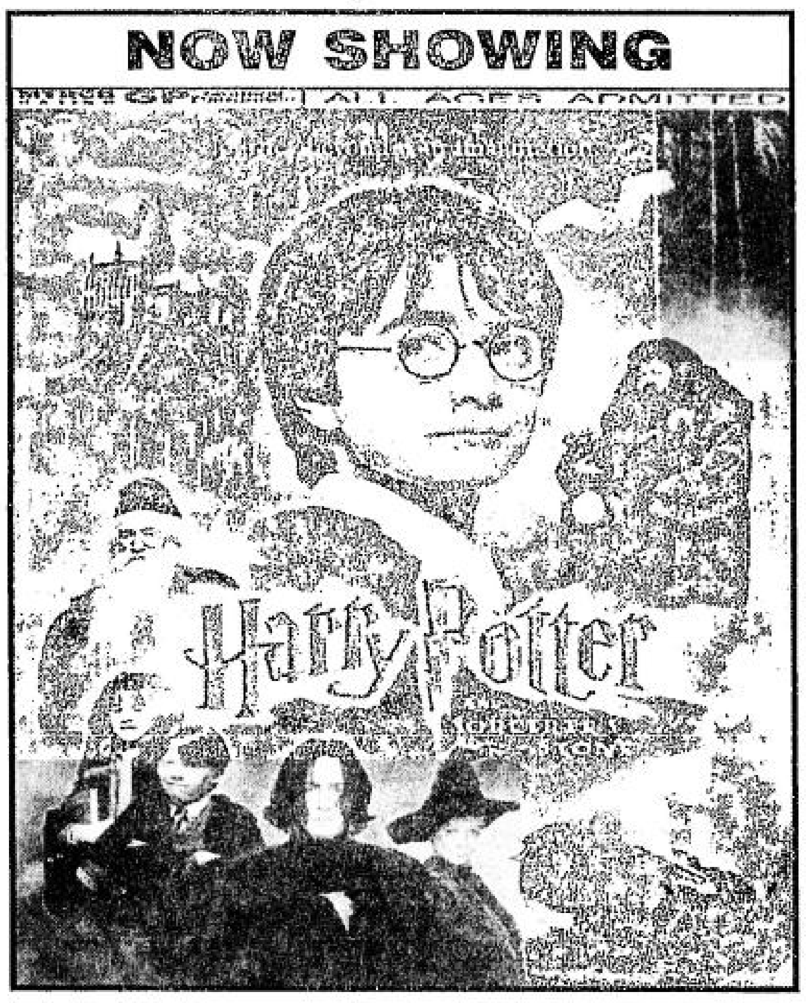
PLDT crewmen are now working round the clock to restore full service to affected telephones.

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

THE MUSKETEER - P 13 12:55, 3:05, 5:15, 7:25, 9:35	MONSTERS, INC. - GP 11:00, 1:10, 3:15, 5:20, 7:25, 9:30	HARRY POTTER - GP 12:20, 3:30, 6:40, 9:50
SUMMER CATCH - P 13 11:00, 1:10, 3:25, 5:40, 7:55, 10:10	SERENDIPITY - P 13 11:20, 1:25, 3:30, 5:35, 7:40, 9:45	THE SCORE - R 18 11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00

Matinee, P80, Mon.-Fri.,11:00 am to 4:45 pm Screenings, Free Seating.


SECOND WEEK !
MTRCB RATING PG – 13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
"ROCK STAR IS AN OUT OF THE BOX SMASH HIT"
"AUDIENCES WILL GET UP AND CHEER"
"ROCK STAR IS A BLAST. MARK WAHLBERG AND JENNIFER ANISTON SHINE."
"MARK WAHLBERG HAS AMAZING ENERGY AND SHEER SCREEN PRESENCE"
MARK WAHLBERG
JENNIFER ANISTON
ROCK STAR
MYX
mossimo


NOW SHOWING
ALL AGES ADMITTED

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD ERMITA
is proud to be the home of
Cinemagic Youth Film Week
(PINOY MAGIC LANTERN)
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...Discover cinema through fun and feeling...
Watch the critically acclaimed and never-before seen films from Australia, Belgium, North Korea, Iran and the Philippines.
ERMITA
For screening and other inquiries please contact 526-7186

Don Henrico's
Onstage
APO HIKING SOCIETY
RATED APO
December 18, 2001
Tuesday : 9 pm
Onstage
2nd level, Greenbelt Mall, Ayala Center, Makati City
Ticket Prices
P600 · P900 · P1,200
Tickets are available at all TicketWorld outlets.
For inquiries and reservations, call 891-5610
A production of
STARCONCERTS

Landfill to bring in P4B for Rizal town, mayor says

By Nelson Flores

THE MAYOR of Rodriguez, Rizal said operations of a sanitary landfill in the town will proceed on schedule despite the opposition of his political opponents.

Mayor Pedro Cuerpo said he has also accepted the challenge to a debate extended by his former vice mayor and political adversary Lito San Jose.

Cuerpo dared San Jose to belie his claim that the landfill will bring progress to the town.

The mayor said once in operation, the sanitary landfill will translate to P4 billion in revenues for the town over the next three years—more than enough to develop the town into a bustling municipality of Rizal province.

He said the municipality only has a budget of P85 million annually.

Cuerpo said the construction of the 30-meter long service road leading to the dumpsite, located at Sitio Lukutang Malaki, Barangay San Isidro, will open the municipality to development at no expense to local residents.

He said the road, to be built at a cost of P130 million, will also serve as an alternative route to the municipality.

"This road will pave the way for the development of a road system in the municipality," Cuerpo explained.

He said there is only one road leading to Rodriguez at the moment, and that road is the narrow national highway which has become so congested that traffic jams are now a common sight in the once sleepy town.

Once the road system has been improved, development will surely come forth, Cuerpo said.

Cuerpo also accused his political opponents of utilizing cheap gimmicks, like challenging him and President Macapagal-Arroyo to a public debate just to grab media limelight.

Nevertheless, Cuerpo said he is accepting the challenge to prove his sincerity and stressed that President Macapagal-Arroyo should be left out of the controversy.

He added media should cover the debate so "the people may know."

Edren needs help

CELESTE

EDREN Celeste, 4, has been diagnosed with acute Lymphocytic Leukemia.

He went into remission after four weeks of chemotherapy, but went into complete bone marrow relapse.

He also developed complication in the form of bacterial meningitis. He is in critical condition and has been confined since September at the Charity Ward of Fe del Mundo Medical Center Foundation Inc.

His parents have no means to provide for his treatment and they are seeking the assistance of kind-hearted donors.

Donations may be sent to L.I.F.E. FAO Edren Celeste c/o Hematology Department, Fe del Mundo Medical Center Foundation Inc., Banaue, Quezon City, telephone number 712-08-45.

Heroes' tribute for fallen firemen

FIREMEN paid tribute yesterday to the courage and heroism of their fallen comrades who perished in a fire at the Meralco power plant in Bel-Air, Makati City on Dec. 14, 1973.

Bureau of Fire Protection Chief Francisco Senot led the 28th Fire Service Recognition Day, held at the Philippine Public Safety College in Makati City, in honor of the Makati firemen who died in the line of duty.

Proclamation No. 1312 declares Dec. 14 as Fire Service Recognition Day.

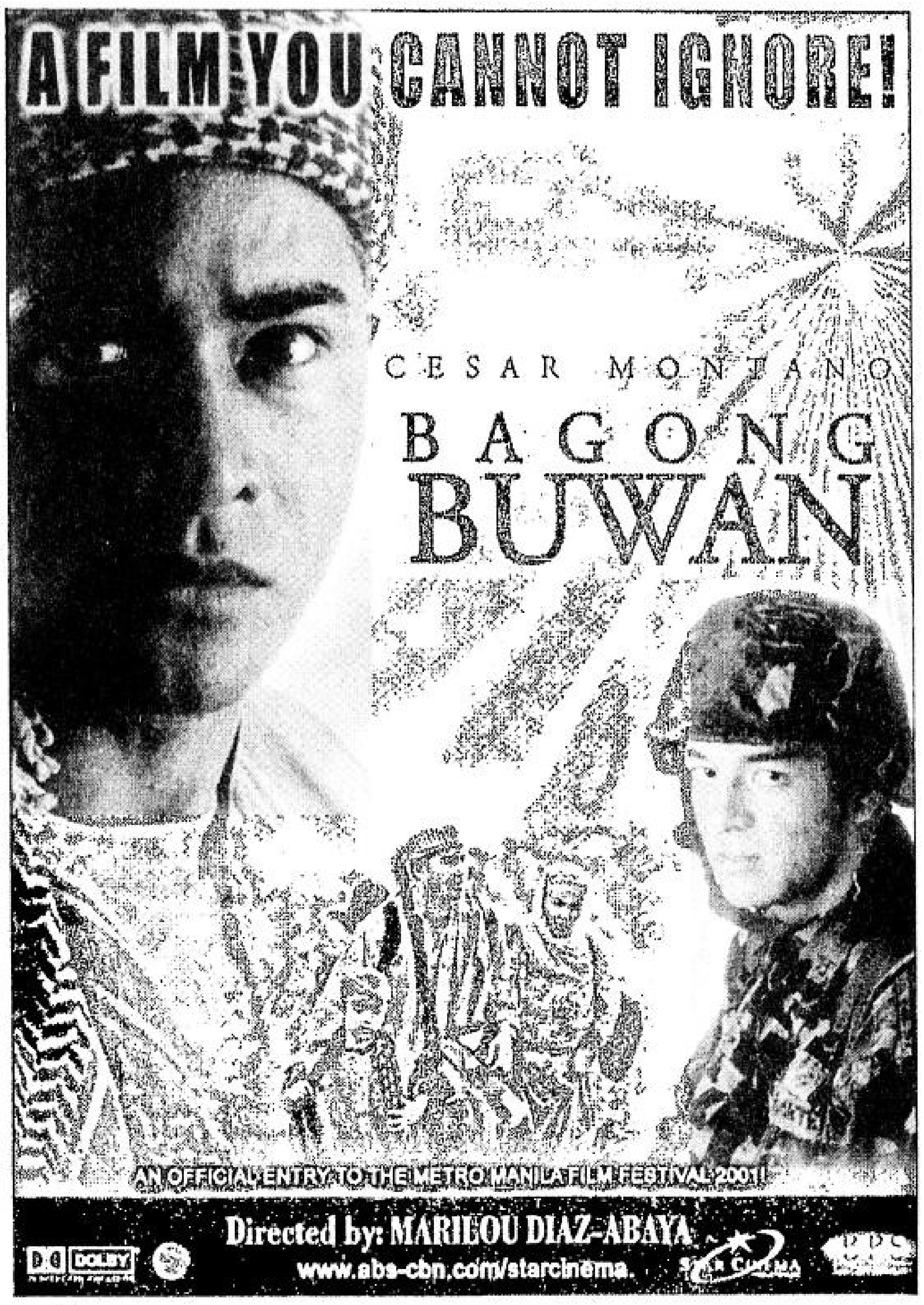
The morning affair also paid tribute to the courage and heroism of the 300 firemen of the New York City Fire Department who perished while attempting to save the lives of those trapped in the World Trade Center during the Sept. 11 attack.

Senot said the gallant Filipino and American firemen were united in their common mission to save lives.

The unveiling of the memorial marker in honor of the Makati City firemen and the turnover of the bond of gallantry painting to the New York City Fire Department highlighted the morning affair.

William Barnhart, chief of the facility management office of the US Embassy in Manila, received the painting.

Barnhart, a former chief of the fire service of Guam before he joined the foreign service, was the guest speaker in the recognition day.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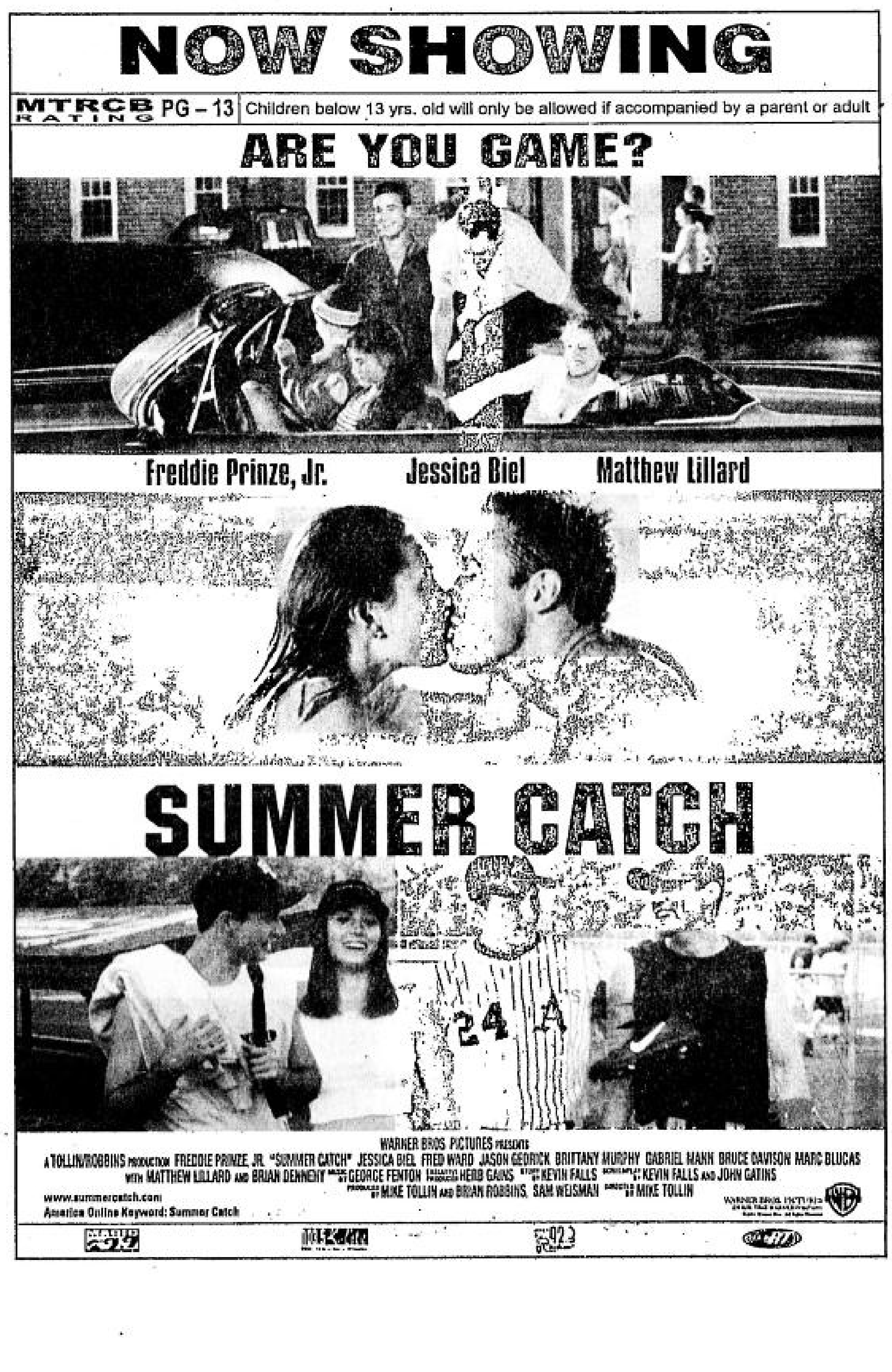
DECEMBER 15 (SATURDAY) SCREENING SCHEDULE

Time	Greenbelt 1	Greenbelt 3	Glorietta 4
11:40AM	Return to Pontianak (Singapore) PG-13	Spinning Gasing (Malaysia) R-18	Love Inventory* (Israel)
2:10PM	Jan Dara (Thailand) R-18	This Is My Moon (Sri Lanka) R-18	Foreign Sister (Israel) G
4:40PM	Happy End (Korea) R-18	Going By (Iran) G	Dang Birely (Thailand) R-18
7:10PM	Erotic Tales 2 (Germany) R-18	Ecce Homo (Germany) PG-13 Clouds *(Nuages) (Belgium)	Nang Nak (Thailand) PG-13
9:40PM	Erotic Tales 3* (Germany)	Farinelli (Belgium) R-18	The King Is Dancing (Le Roi Danse) (Belgium) R-18

*MTRCB rating pending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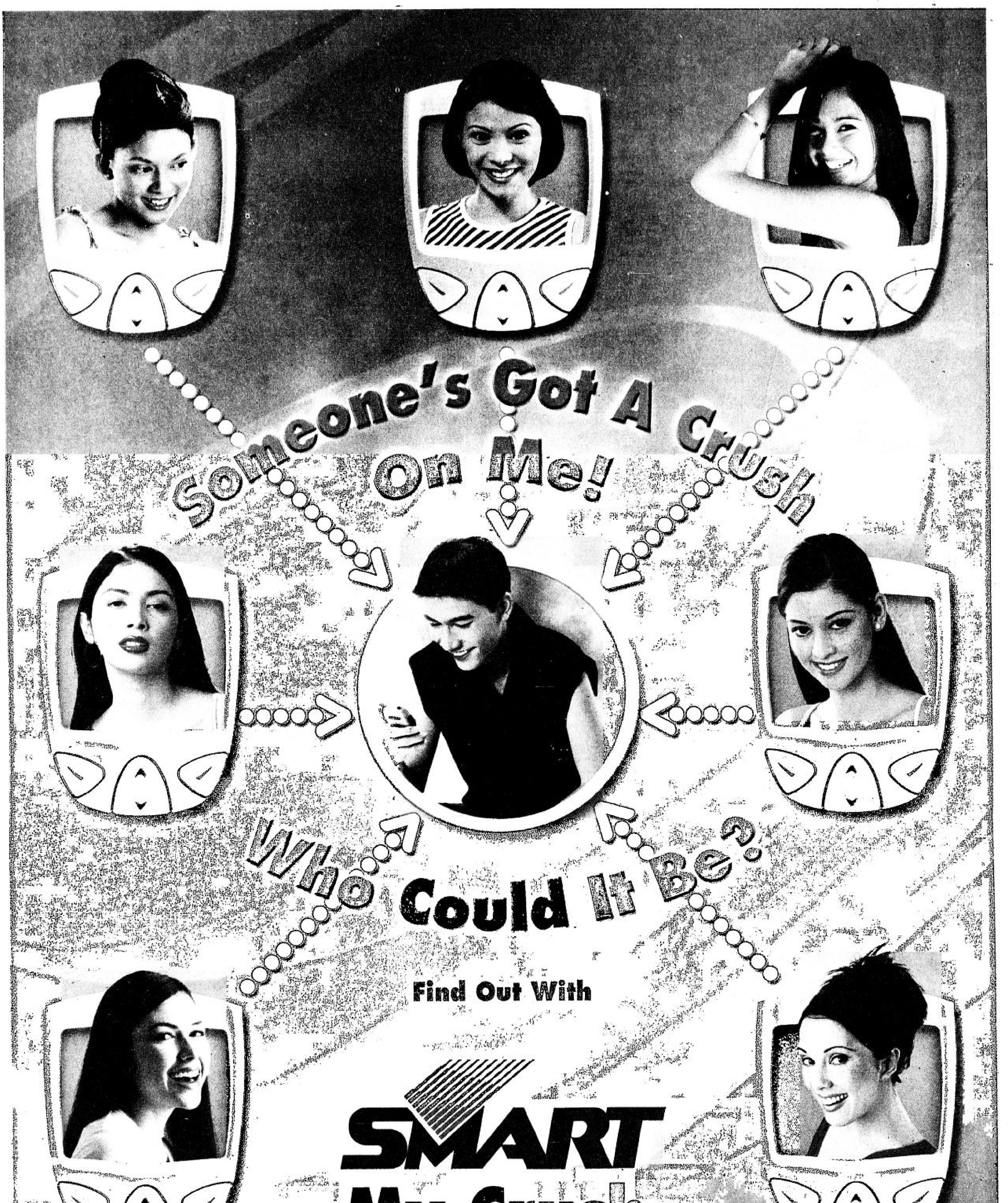
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BUSINESS

RAUL O. MARCELO, Editor ■ CORRIE S. NARISMA, Assistant Editor

RFM buys back 21% stake for ₱1B

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

FOOD and beverage conglomerate RFM Corp. has reached a deal with New York-based fund manager WP Argosy Ltd. to buy out the latter's 21-percent stake in RFM for P1.05 billion using part of the proceeds from the sale of its profitable soft drink unit Cosmos Bottling Corp.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, RFM vice president Ramon Lopez said the company's board of directors had approved the buy-back of WP Argosy's 408.77 million common shares at P2.57 each—or higher than the prevailing market price—upon the closing of the P14-billion Cosmos sale deal.

RFM shares yesterday surged 6 centavos to P2.20 as investors anticipated the higher price at which the WP Argosy deal would be closed.

In an interview, Lopez said WP Argosy, a foreign fund which invested as a minority shareholder in RFM in 1999, was selling its stake in order to consolidate its resources in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington D.C.

"They are rethinking their investment portfolio," Lopez said.

For its part, Lopez said RFM decided to buy back the shares to take advantage of depressed market prices. He said RFM did not have other existing treasury-held shares at present.

A buyback program by companies with sufficient retained earnings is usually seen as favorable by the market since it boosts earnings per share as companies do not pay dividends on treasury-held shares. Companies decide to buy back their shares when they feel that their shares are undervalued by the market.

After negotiating with WP Argosy, Lopez said RFM decided to buy the shares from the US-based fund at a premium over the market because of its significant participation in RFM's board during the last few years.

"They have provided certain resources, particularly in the area of information technology," Lopez said.

About 60 percent of RFM is currently controlled by the Concepcion group of companies while 18 percent is held by the public.

Food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp., through Coca Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc., is buying Cosmos. RFM, which owns 82.3 percent of the country's second biggest bottler, will thus end up with P11.5 billion in proceeds from the sale, enough to wipe out its outstanding debts and pursue new investments.

At present, RFM is continuing initiatives to "right-size" the organization to better weather the economic crisis. For instance, it is open to selling poultry unit Swift Foods Inc. to interested groups like SMC. Plans are also underway to bring strategic partners to its flour milling and property businesses.

Swift manufactures branded poultry and meat products like chicken, corned beef, sausages and luncheon meat.

RFM president Jose Concepcion III had said the restructuring of the RFM organization would not end with the sale of Cosmos. "The year 2002 is not the right time to expand. We will still be disposing of other businesses which we think should not be a part of our portfolio."

"Once we're able to collect the cash, the first thing we'll do is to continue to do our work of bringing strategic investors to our different groups so that we have better chances of going through the crisis," Concepcion said.

The financial closing of the Cosmos deal is expected to take place before the year ends.

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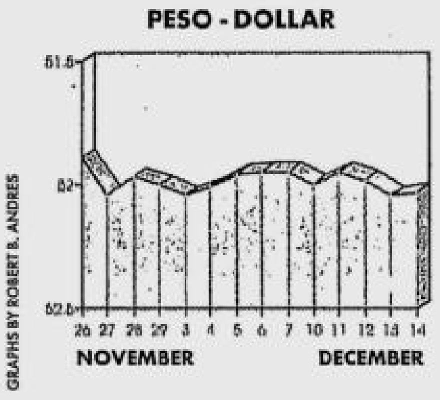

GRAPHS BY ROBERT B. ANDRES

Peso-Dollar Rate

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Dec. 14, 2001

¥ 127.42 = $1

As of 5 p.m.,
Dec. 14, 2001

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STOCK MARKET

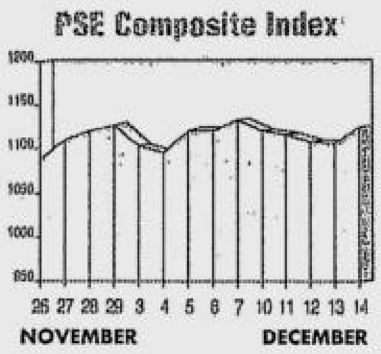
Shares rise 1.7%

THE MAIN stock index rose sharply at the close of a mixed trading session yesterday, buoyed by expectation San Miguel will finalize the sale of a strategic stake to Japan's Kirin Brewery later in the day, traders said.

Selected banks and properties also gained after the central bank lopped another quarter point off its overnight interest rates on Thursday.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended up 18.28 points, or 1.7 percent, at 1,126.01,

SHARES/ B3



(See stock market report on Page B5)

Longer transfer period for Pandacan terminals backed

BY RONNEL W. DOMINGO

THE CHIEF of the New Petroleum Players Association said the group was in support of giving the three major oil companies enough time to relocate their depots from Pancadan to ensure supply security in Metro Manila.

"Moving the depots should not be rushed or there would be a disruption of oil supply in the metropolis," NPPA president Fernando Martinez said Thursday.

Martinez said he agreed with the Big Three's assessment that they would need about five years to transfer their Pandacan terminals.

Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Caltex Philippines Inc. operate storage and distribution facilities in Pandacan around which communities have mushroomed over the last 80 years.

The Manila city government had earlier ruled that the product terminals should be removed within six months.

On the other hand, the national government and the oil firms have signed an agreement to cooperate on putting up a master plan to realize the depots' transfer.

A committee is currently doing a study on how to do this, considering economic, environmental and social factors.

In an earlier interview, Energy Secretary Vicente Perez explained that the master plan would likely include the costs and length of time needed if relocation was decided and the subsequent use of the Pandacan property, including the pipelines connecting it to Batangas.

Petron, the biggest of the three refiners, said it would need P3 bill-

LONGER/ B4

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Wait dream

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

SO you want to forget your wordly problems. Go ahead, don't be shy, listen to PCGG Chair Haydee Yorac. She is as entertaining as ever.

In these bad times, she provides the best escape from reality. Except perhaps . . . well, a wet dream! I just don't know if it's legal and moral.

Yorac, anyway, has a fantastic plan. Nobody can say who fed her the bright idea. If it was one of her PCGG boys, I wouldn't really be suprised.

It's so fantastic it borders on the surreal. Yorac said the CIIF or coconut levy fund, the SSS, the GSIS and San Miguel—together—should sell their San Miguel shares.

It seems that, starting the other day, the PCGG decides for the GSIS, the SSS and the CIIF. I just didn't know that the SSS and the GSIS wanted to sell their San Miguel holdings.

While we are at it, why don't we also sell the shares of all the religious groups in the company, including those of the Catholic church?

For if Yorac says so, sure, ma'am, right away! All those shares, together, take up roughly 55 percent of the total shares in San Miguel. Selling them should be easy to do.

You see, at the price Yorac boasts she can get for the shares, the entire block should fetch roughly P150 billion only. Wow! That's fantastic! Let's do it tomorrow!

* * *

SUCH an amount is only a little more than the total net worth of the five—again, that's five—biggest banks in the country, all put together.

And they are not pushover banks. Just take a look at the line-up. Metrobank. Equitable PCI. Landbank. PNB. BPI. See what I mean?

The clincher is, Yorac even said, reportedly, that her plan is superior to the plan of San Miguel chair Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., who is not exactly her best friend nowadays.

Under the Danding plan, San Miguel issues 15 percent of its shares to Japan's largest brewing company Kirin, at about 25-percent premium over the market price.

Kirin is investing about $540 million. This, Danding reportedly said, should be one-and-a-half times all the foreign investments in the country so far this year.

Surely, the money will help the country cover its international payments. In fact, the Bangko Sentral expects a BOP deficit of $2.4 billion this year. Only $2 billion to go!

Bayong, Yorac shouted. Her offer is, somebody, anybody—only God knows who—must buy all that 55-percent control in San Miguel. In short, all or nothing!

* * *

SHE'LL end up with nothing. Nobody in this country has that kind of money. What's more, because times are hard, and business prospects are hazy, nobody wants to invest.

Yet Yorac can't be bothered by such a reality in business. Ah, *basta*, let's auction off those San Miguel shares. That way, Yorac said, the block commands a higher price.

Her target is a 100-percent premium. With San Miguel doing at P50 per share in the market, her price should be around P100 per share. Any taker? Please, don't be shy!

Never mind that, prior to the Asian fnancial meltdown, San Miguel shares could fetch only as high as P90 per share. And that was the peak. And it was a bull market.

Today the market is so depressed, businesses are closing down one by one. Gosh, we are about to hold a business version of *tiangge*. Everything is dirt cheap.

Yet Yorac dreams of selling San Miguel at P100 per share. Maybe Yorac can show her buyer to Danding, before he decides, as she suggested, to drop the Kirin deal.

For if a bird in hand is better than two in the bush, as my Apong Oning used to tell my dad, a bird in the stomach beats any fantasy of the PCGG. Or something like that.

* * *

ALRIGHT, so maybe Yorac intends to sell the controling block to foreign groups. Only foreigners can afford to pay $3 billion for anything nowadays.

Yorac herself said, apparently referring to the investment of Kirin in San Miguel, that we should not just take in any foreign investor. It must be the right kind, she said.

While you were sleeping, it seems the PCGG became the judge of what is and what is not a good foreign investor. Move over, Mar.

I don't know if, indeed, foreign investors are coming here in droves. Last time I heard from Trade and Industry Secretary Mar Roxas; they were not.

And so Yorac may have a point, when she said that Kirin itself can even join the auction which she intends to hold sometime in the future for the controling block.

Sure, that's one buyer. Of course Kirin will rush to the auction. It only has to pay much more. What's a couple of hundreds of millions of pesos between strangers, huh?

In the auction, Yorac envisions Kirin buying at P100 per share. In the Danding deal, Kirin is actually paying for P62 per share. Which do you think will Kirin choose?

* * *

HONESTLY, I don't now if Yorac regards Kirin executives as stupid moronic retards, but I don't think anybody can fool them. Not even a shrewd businessman like Danding.

In the first place, it's doutbful that Kirin wants to take control of a company in which some government officials always insist on meddling in its management. Oops.

As it is, Yorac is already telling on Danding what to do. Well, it's the story of our life. The government always dictates on business. No wonder, investors are shying away.

And even if the Yorac alternative is plausible enough, San Miguel will just have to wait for a long while to get the $500-million investment that Kirin is making now.

The shares of the coconut levy fund are under litigation. Yorac must therefore either forge a settlement or win all the cases before she can even plan to sell them.

I mean, in the harsh world of business, when they plan, they always put a time frame. You can't just order businessmen to wait for you to stop dreaming.

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Gov't pushes ODA-funded projects

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE MACAPAGAL administration has vowed to aggressively use foreign funds for infrastructure projects next year and use as much as P50.3 billion in official development assistance or ODA, an amount 76 percent higher than this year's P28 billion in utilized foreign funds.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin yesterday said that of the total ODA to be used next year, P33 billion would come from foreign assistance and P16 billion would be the equity of the Philippine government in the form of counterpart funding.

The government was supposed to use as much as P70 billion in foreign funds next year but budget constraints forced it to cut the use of ODA by 28 percent.

Boncodin noted that with a better use of funds from foreign assistance next year, the government could accelerate much-needed infrastructure projects.

"We are trying our best to provide counterpart funds for the ODA because we pay P1 billion in commitment fees yearly whether or not the projects were pursued," the budget chief explained.

The budget for the counterpart funding, Boncodin said, would come from local borrowings and government earnings.

Among the foreign-assisted projects to be pursued next year include the Butuan City Circumferential Road, the Grains Sector Development, the Pinatubo Waterways, the Solar Power Technology, the Agrarian Reform Project, the Metro Manila Transport, the Edsa Railways Linkage, and the projects for the Special Zone of Peace and Development or Szopad in Mindanao.

This year, the government was forced to cancel about $600 million worth of foreign-assisted projects.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho had also instructed the inter-agency Investment Coordinating Council to tighten the monitoring of slow-moving projects to be financed by ODA and to cancel projects that had not moved 18 months after these were approved.

In the first half of this year, the government had implemented $413 million worth of ODA-funded projects against its target of $502 million. Still, the finance secretary said the utilization rate of the foreign funding had increased to 82 percent as of June.

The country's official development assistance comes mostly from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.

While these foreign funds offer lower interest rates and more relaxed terms, they require a commitment fee of a little less than one percent of the total project cost.

By canceling $600 million worth of ODA projects, the government was able to save on P23 million in commitment fees, Camacho said.

RP gets European grant for aviation projects

By Abigail L. Ho

THE PHILIPPINES yesterday became the first signatory to a 22-million euro grant from the European Union and the European Association of Aerospace Industries (AECMA) to partly fund South and Southeast Asian civil aviation undertakings over the next three years.

Collectively dubbed the EU-Asian Civil Aviation Cooperation Project, the 30-million euro project will focus on air safety, air traffic management and customer support in 15 Asian countries.

"It is crucial to restore passenger confidence, specially after the (Sept. 11 terror attacks on the United States)," EU Delegation of the European Commission in the Philippines head Yves Gazzo said in a briefing yesterday.

Air Transportation Office chief Adelberto Yap added that, with the funding, the ATO would be provided with much needed assistance to implement measures that would enhance security in all aspects of civil aviation in the country.

"We will upgrade safety procedures, aviation security and air safety training. We will institute measures to uplift security procedures in all airports," he said.

Yap added that the Philippines already ranked as the leader in aviation security in the region, but they could still use some enhancements to better ensure the safety of air travelers.

The EU put in 15 million euros for the project while the AECMA provided 7 million euros.

Aside from the Philippines, other beneficiaries of the grant include: Bangladesh, Brunei, Bhutan, Cambodia, Maldives, Indonesia, Nepal, Laos, Pakistan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

"The South and Southeast Asia region is one of the world's most important economies with significant potentials for aerospace products and air transport services. Notwithstanding the recent financial turmoil, the long-term outlook is very positive for the region with air traffic projected to increase yearly by 5 to 7 percent for domestic passenger traffic and 7 percent for international passenger traffic in the next 10 years," the project's concept paper stated.

The project aims to "promote and support mutually beneficial cooperation between Europe and South and Southeast Asia, and establish a solid relationship to stimulate cooperation and to further business linkages between the EU and the regional aviation sector in South Asia."

Gazzo assured that the grant had "no strings attached" and would not require the Philippine government to award contracts only to European entities for specific projects that would be funded by it.

Shares rise 1.7%

(From page B1)

after shedding 0.89 point Thursday. The index has given up 2.3 percent since Dec. 7.

Turnover in the market rose to P570.13 million from P356.17 million on Thursday. There were 27 risers, 31 losers and 34 stocks unchanged.

The broader market, however, was weak, with decliners outpacing gainers 31 to 27, while 34 issues were unchanged, as Wall Street's overnight losses continued to encourage profit-taking in select issues, traders said.

News that San Miguel was set to announce later Friday that it is selling a 15-percent stake to Japan's Kirin Brewery to raise over $500 million for expansion boosted the company's shares, said ATR Kim Eng Securities research head Luz Lorenzo.

"Just look at the selling price quoted in newspapers for the San Miguel shares and you will understand why San Miguel shares are moving higher," she said. *AP, Reuters*

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SUBSTANDARD PRODUCTS

DTI sues LPG tank maker

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry is seeking the cancellation of the license of Pilipinas Daechang Steel Inc. (PDSI) due to its failure to meet government standards in the production of LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) cylinders.

Trade Undersecretary Andres Cristobal Jr. said the DTI has filed formal charges against PDSI in order to stop the company from selling more LPG tanks.

The DTI ordered in October a recall of 44,000 11-kilogram LPG cylinders produced by the Filipino-Korean firm between December 2000 and April 2001.

The PDSI tanks were found to be substandard following random inspection by the DTI-Bureau of Product Standards which showed that the company failed to use universal testing machine for mechanical and hydraulic quality control maintenance; failure to use annealing furnace; and employment of unqualified welders.

The DTI warned that substandard tanks, which proliferated after the deregulation of the oil industry, were a risk to property and life and should be swapped for better quality tanks.

Cristobal said the DTI has so far recalled 3,000 and it expected more substandard LPG cylinders to come in before the swap period expires on Feb. 7 next year. The DTI has stepped up its tank recall campaign in order to hasten the return of the substandard tanks.

The DTI has urged consumers to check the manufacturer and date of production of the LPG tanks from the engraving on the collar. Consumers can' return the substandard tanks to retailers and dealers that, in turn, would replace them free of charge (excluding contents). Roxas said retailers or dealers who refuse to exchange these tanks should be reported to the DTI.

The recall, which would cost at least P26 million to be shouldered by PDSI, has affected several re-fillers such as AOM Enterprises, Econo Gas, Laguna Gas, Nation Gas, Savers Gas, Double-M Gas, Island Gas, M-Gas and Right Gas. These tanks were sold mostly in Metro Manila and some parts of the Visayas. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

e-PLDT signs 10-year contract with Teletech

e-PLDT, the internet arm of the country's leader in telecommunications, recently entered into a 10-year service contract with Teletech Holdings Inc., a global provider of CRM services and solutions for large domestic and foreign multinational companies.

This new venture of e-PLDT has chosen e-Square IT Park of the Bonifacio Global City as its base in the country. It will occupy approximately 5,200 square meters of space in the newly constructed Hatchasia GlobalCity Center and will initially accommodate 500 workstations. It will be offered to clients in the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and other English-speaking countries.

As its strategic advantage, the venture will use PLDT's highly reliable fiber optic Global Point of Presence Network, which spans eight countries worldwide to carry voice traffic. It will also capitalize on PLDT's wide array of data center services to deliver superior technological solutions to Teletech's worldwide operations.

Ken Tuchman, Teletech chair and chief executive officer, said that the tie up with PLDT gave Teletech the ability to further strengthen its offshore English Language CRM.

"We reviewed the best locations for Teletech to expand its English Language CRM capabilities and concluded that the Philippines offered tremendous advantages. Combined with its highly educated, customer service oriented and English-speaking workforce, the country's key attraction is its technologically advanced telecommunications infrastructure," he averred.

Hatchasia GlobalCity Center, FBDC's newly constructed IT building, has a 48 single-mode core fiber optic facilities capable of high-speed Internet access. It is connected to Bonifacio Cable One Corp.'s gateway for voice, data, video and other value-added services. BCOC, a subsidiary of FBDC, has already signed agreements with major telecommunication companies such as, Eastern, Globe and Digitel for interconnection arrangements.

Rafael R. Bengzon, FBDC vice president for e-Square, revealed that e-PLDT's CRM venture with Teletech was now in the fit-out preparation stage. "Initial plans are for 500 workstations, but there are provisions to expand these to a thousand stations in the future," he said.

Deeper cuts in BSP key policy rates seen

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE MONETARY Board is expected to implement more rate cuts in the near term to further align local interest rates with those prevailing in the region.

Trade and Industry Secretary and Monetary Board member Manuel "Mar" Roxas II said that despite the series of cuts in the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' key policy rates, the Philippines still has one of the highest interest rates in the region.

The Monetary Board has cut the BSP's policy rates 13 times this year for a total of 725 basis points since December last year. The BSP's rates are now at its lowest in more than six years. The Department of Trade and Industry said it would push for further reduction in the interest rates.

Roxas explained that the Monetary Board has two objectives in pushing for deeper rate cuts—to give distressed corporations relief from high interest expenses and to stimulate spending on white line items and other capital goods by consumers and businesses.

Roxas said the seven-member Monetary Board could afford to further lower the rates since inflation has remained benign despite the series of rate cuts made by the BSP policy-making body to mirror the reduction in key US interest rates.

"We believe that more rate cuts are timely, considering the relative stability in the peso-dollar exchange rate and inflation," Roxas said.

Interest rates are expected to fall even further with the Monetary Board's decision to reduce the liquidity reserve requirements on bank deposits and deposit substitutes/liabilities, common trust funds and other fiduciary liabilities (Tofa) from 11 percent to 9 percent. This would bring down the total reserve requirement from 20 percent to 18 percent, which the MB estimated would free up to P26 billion in funds into the market.

Roxas reckoned that this round of rate and reserve cuts would lead to increased bank lending activities and give companies access to cheaper money to help them weather through the crisis.

Broadband provider trims targets

MULTIMEDIA Telephony Inc., the country's pioneer provider of wireless broadband services, has scaled down its investment targets and expansion plans as it expects the economy to weaken further next year.

Broadband Philippines chair and chief executive Jose Perez de Venecia III said the company slashed from $16 million to $14 million its planned capital expenditures this year.

Multimedia runs Broadband Philippines.

De Venecia said this would entail a cutback in Multimedia's business targets. The company now plans to connect 100 buildings from its original plan of 150 and corner 600 clients from 800.

De Venecia said the company also decided to pay off its debts and live within its means to survive next year, which he reckoned would be worse than this year.

"We have to reduce the risks, be more frugal and more cautious in expanding services, during these difficult times," De Venecia said.

He added that Multimedia moved back its projected break-even from end-2002 to the first quarter of 2003

He remained confident, however, that demand for broadband services would continue to be resilient despite the economic slump aggravated by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States.

De Venecia said more companies had become more aware of the need for reliable and stable communication services following the terrorist attacks.

He said most firms had cut down on their overseas conferences and hotel reservations by resorting to video conferencing for their meetings.

De Venecia said the company would target call centers and technology parks for broadband services after hooking up 100 prime corporate buildings in Makati and Ortigas.

Multimedia is owned by the De Venecia group and Callahan Broadband Wireless Inc., with 40 percent each, and Next Century Partners Ltd., a Singapore-Philippine investment fund affiliated with billionaire George Soros, with 18 percent.

Broadband Philippines uses the local multipoint distribution system technology and equipment provided by Nortel Networks Corp., which transmits data, voice, video and Internet access via microwave frequencies using a network linked through rooftop antennas, hubs and cabling. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Longer transfer . . .

(From page B1)

ion for the relocation of its depot.

On the other hand, officials of Shell and Caltex said they needed between P5 billion and P6 billion.

For his part, industrialist Raul Concepcion had proposed that a joint venture between oil companies and the government on new depots replacing the ones in Pandacan could be "a convenient and fast way" to settle the issue.

Concepcion, who chairs the private sector Consumer and Oil Price Watch, said the government could provide the land for the new terminals representing 40 percent of a venture with the oil firms.

"Through the allocation of land—which is a very important element of the solution—the government could share in the venture with minimal costs on its part," he said.

The businessman said such a joint venture was preferable to other arrangements because it would be transparent.

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▲Under the Sand (France) ▲This is My Moon (Sri Lanka) ▲Tears of the Black Tiger (Thailand) ▲Spinning Gasing (Malaysia) ▲Price of Milk (New Zealand) ▲No Man's Land (Belgium) ▲Nang Nak (Thailand) ▲Map of Sex & Love (Hong Kong) ▲Jan Dara (Thailand) ▲King is Dancing (Belgium) ▲Farinelli (France) ▲Happy End (Korea) ▲Isle, The (Korea) ▲Greedy Guts (Czech Republic) ▲Good Work (France)

The Best of CINEMANILA 2001

Dec. 17-24 • Greenbelt and Glorietta Cinemas, Ayala Center, Makati City

Featured films are led by the top contenders for the following festival awards:

- Lino Brocka Award (Grand Prize)
- Grand Jury Prize
- Best Actor in a Feature Film
- Best Actress in a Feature Film
- NETPAC Award (Critics Prize for Best Asian Film)
- Best Short Film
- Ishmael Bernal Award (Young Cinema Prize)

and other critically acclaimed films.

December	Greenbelt 1	Greenbelt 2	Greenbelt 3
17	Bangkok Dangerous Thailand	The Isle Korea R-18	Happy End Korea R-18
18	Farinelli Belgium R-18	Divided We Fall Czech Republic PG-13	Good Work (Beau Travail) France
19	The King is Dancing (Le Roi Danse) Belgium R-18	Greedy Guts (Otesanek) Czech Republic R-18	Under the Sand France R-18
20	No Man's Land Belgium PG-13	Detector Norway R-18	The Price of Milk New Zealand G
21	Chunhyang Korea R-18	This is My Moon Sri Lanka R-18	Clouds of May Turkey G
22	Jan Dara Thailand R-18	Nang Nak Thailand PG-13	Dang Birely Thailand R-18
23	Divine Mexico R-18	Spinning Gasing Malaysia R-18	Roads and Bridges USA G
24	Tears of the Black Tiger Thailand	The Map of Sex & Love Hong Kong R-18	Barking Dogs Never Bite Korea PG-13

CINEMANILA 2001 international film festival

Note: Award winning films in Cinemanila 2001 will be screened at Glorietta 4 Art Film cinema.

www.cinemanila.com.ph

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Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Friday, December 14, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	54	56.5	54	56.5	489,000
China Banking Corp.	560	560	560	560	2,060
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	22	22.25	22	22.25	234,800
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	179	180	178	180	12,020
Philippine National Bank	55	56.5	55	56.5	42,900
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	19	19	19	19	3,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	14.25	14.25	14	14.25	38,700
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Filipino Fund Inc	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	230,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1280	1300	1280	1300	520
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1130	1135	1125	1130	25,310
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	23	23	23	23	51,400
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	0.37	0.39	0.37	0.39	1,250,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	580	580	575	580	44,490
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	1,000,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	900,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	100,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	405	410	402.5	407.5	236,710
Ivantage Corp.	0.55	0.55	0.48	0.48	170,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	26,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	22.5	23	22.5	22.5	12,600
Manila Electric Co. B	30.5	30.5	30	30	1,074,100
Petron Corp.	1.44	1.5	1.42	1.48	5,643,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	40,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	15,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	1.88	1.94	1.88	1.94	1,827,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	10,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	40,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	50,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	5,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.9	5.9	5.7	5.7	491,000
La Tondena Distillers Inc.	24	24	23	23.5	85,200
RFM Corp.	2.14	2.24	2.1	2.2	18,961,000
San Miguel Corp. A	42	44	42	44	400,400
San Miguel Corp. B	51	56	51	55.5	547,600
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	10,000
Ayala Corp.	4.55	4.65	4.55	4.6	5,649,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.68	0.68	1,780,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	50,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	10,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	50,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.18	0.18	210,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.68	0.68	0.65	0.66	23,950,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	700,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.19	0.2	0.19	0.2	60,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	100,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	1,190,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	25.5	26	25.5	26	82,100
Global Equities Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	200,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	480,000
House of Investments Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	50,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.5	1.54	1.5	1.54	71,000
Medco Holdings	0.12	0.13	0.12	0.13	110,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.69	0.71	0.69	0.7	5,000,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.32	8,070,000
Music Corp.	0.36	0.38	0.36	0.37	4,000,000
Solid Group, Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	100,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	4	4	4	4	10,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	300,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. B	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	10,000
Central Azucar Don Pedro	0.77	0.79	0.77	0.79	370,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13	13.25	13	13.25	164,800
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.45	0.47	0.45	0.47	620,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	200,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	22.75	22.75	22.5	22.5	1,794,000
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.58	1.6	1.56	1.56	145,000
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10	10	10	10	2,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10	10	10	10	1,000
Philweb.Com Inc -Warrants	0.0055	0.006	0.005	0.006	182,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.7	4.75	4.7	4.75	11,523,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	10,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	600,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.35	700,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.23	0.24	0.23	0.24	2,650,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.7	1.76	1.7	1.74	9,069,000
City & Land Developers	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	10,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	100,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.2	6.1	6.1	11,179,000
Universal Rightfield Prop	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	300,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	20,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	3,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	2.8	3	2.7	3	59,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.3	2.4	1.3	1.3	23,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.022	0.022	0.02	0.02	6,400,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	500,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	4,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	180,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.0975	0.0975	0.0975	0.0975	200,000
OIL					
Interport Res.	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	170,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	18,000,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.215	0.22	0.215	0.22	360,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	1,078,310	68,234,930.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	346,443,400	360,071,075.00
PRO	36,141,000	139,895,630.00
Mining	14,382,000	513,200.00
OIL	189,360,000	1,209,300.00
GRAND TOTALS :	587,414,710	569,949,135.00

AVERAGES		
Banks & Fin Svc	466.80	UP 10.01
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,547.62	UP 23.36
PRO	489.87	DOWN 1.78
Mining	1,016.96	DOWN 6.29
OIL	1.98	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	690.12	UP 0.61
Composite	1,126.01	UP 18.28

NO. OF ADVANCES: 27; NO. OF DECLINES: 31; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 34;
NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 92; NO. OF TRADES: 2,497

CURRENCIES

Dec. 14, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.119695	1.000000	52.0340
Japan	Yen	0.008894	0.007943	0.4133
United Kingdom	Pound	1.612585	1.440200	74.9394
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.143735	0.128370	6.6796
Switzerland	Franc	0.677823	0.605364	31.4995
Canada	Dollar	0.713500	0.637227	33.1575
Singapore	Dollar	0.612190	0.546747	28.4494
Australia	Dollar	0.579552	0.517598	26.9327
Bahrain	Dinar	2.970172	2.652661	138.0286
Kuwait	Dinar	N/A	N/A	N/A
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.298586	0.266667	13.8758
Brunei	Dollar	0.610521	0.545256	28.3719
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000111	0.000099	0.0052
Thailand	Baht	0.025646	0.022904	1.1918
UAE	Dirham	0.304928	0.272331	14.1705
Korea	Won	0.000886	0.000791	0.0412
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.893100	46.4716
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.456635	23.7605
France	Franc	0.152450	0.136152	7.0845
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.405271	21.0879
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.064904	3.3772
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.022139	1.1520
Italy	Lire	0.000516	0.000461	0.0240
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.150209	7.8160
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004455	0.2318
Spain	Peseta	0.006011	0.005368	0.2793
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024789	0.022139	1.1520
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.134003	59.0067

CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM

Fresh figures bolster hope for US economy, analysts say

WASHINGTON—A gut-wrenching slide in the terror-shaken US economy may finally be slowing, economists said Thursday, as the queues of newly jobless people shrank dramatically.

Experts maintained their cautious optimism in the face of a plunge in retail sales in November, saying the underlying trend for consumer spending—accounting for two-thirds of the US economy—was firm.

"I think it is the leading edge of a recovery. We are going to see a recovery begin in the first quarter of next year," Northern Trust Co. chief economist Paul Kasreil said.

The number of people making new claims for state unemployment benefits dropped 86,000 to 394,000 last week, the steepest fall in nine years, the Labor Department said.

US retail sales also plunged by a record 3.7 percent in November from the previous month, but economists said wild swings in car-buying had skewed the result.

Core retail sales, excluding the impact of cars, building materials and gasoline station sales, rose 0.1 percent, Salomon Smith Barney economist Melanie Jani said.

"Unemployment claims data released this morning indicate that the worst of the layoffs may be behind us," she said.

"Retail sales, while weaker than expected, still indicate that consumer momentum going into the fourth quarter remains strong."

Wall St. was unimpressed.

The blue-chip barometer Dow Jones industrials average, depressed by the retail sales and a profit-warning from telecommunication equipment giant Lucent Technologies, fell 128.36 points, or 1.3 percent, to 9,766.45.

The seasonally adjusted decline in people claiming new unemployment benefits was the steepest since August 1992.

A four-week moving average of initial jobless claims fell 12,000 to 450,000—the lowest figure since the week to Sept. 22, when the Sept. 11 attacks tore into the labor market.

It was a rare ray of light for workers.

In the two months to November, the unemployment rate shot up to 5.7 percent from 4.9 percent and 799,000 jobs evaporated, latest government figures showed.

Retail sales figures, meanwhile, were swayed by the volatile car industry, experts said.

Auto sales had plummeted 11.9 percent in November after leaping 24.2 percent in October, when the performance was inflated by car companies offering zero interest financing offers.

Core retail sales data were solid, however, economists said.

"It appears that we are sort of back on track after the plunge in September and the surge in October," Northern Trust's Kasreil said.

"We have given back some of the surge in November but if you do a three month average of the level of retail sales, the trend is pointing up, not down," Kasreil said.

"We are in a recession still but it is as though there is still patriotism. People are doing their duty, continuing to buy."

The US economy was already weakening before it took a pounding from the suicide onslaught on New York and Washington.

Gross domestic product in the world's biggest economy slid 1.1 percent in the July-September quarter, the biggest dive in a decade, and most economists expect a further contraction in this quarter.

But the economy is widely expected to enter an accelerating recovery period next year, fuelled by lower interest rates, higher government spending and the need to restock dwindling inventories.

Conference Board economist Delos Smith said consumers, whose spending accounts for two-thirds of US economic activity, remained robust.

The deteriorating retail sales figure "is clearly car-driven but the rest does not look bad, so the consumer is still hanging on in there. That is positive," he said.

In an attempt to bolster the US economy, which officially slipped into a recession in March, Federal Reserve policymakers sliced the key federal funds rate by a quarter point to a 40-year low of 1.75 percent Tuesday. *AFP*

Oracle posts lower fiscal earnings

REDWOOD SHORES, California—Oracle Corp., the world's No. 2 software vendor, on Thursday posted lower fiscal second-quarter earnings and a decline in software license revenues that came in below the company's lowered forecast.

For the quarter ended Nov. 30, the Redwood Shores, California-based company had a net income of $549.5 million, or 10 cents per share, compared with $622.8 million, or 11 cents, a year earlier.

Those earnings were in line with lowered estimates from Oracle and Wall St. analysts.

"It was our toughest quarter in a decade. When the economy improves, we will earn a lot more," Oracle chief executive Larry Ellison said in a statement.

Oracle said total revenue declined to $2.4 billion from $2.7 billion, falling short of Wall St.'s consensus estimate for revenue of $2.5 billion, as compiled by Thomson Financial/First Call.

Oracle, which consistently has held down expenses, also saw its second-quarter operating margins slightly erode to 35 percent from 36 percent last year.

"The bad news is that the quarter is about the worst they've ever had and there's no sign of recovery. The good news is, even in this horrible environment, their cash flows and margins are extremely strong," Bob Austrian, an analyst at Banc of America Securities, told Reuters.

Software license revenues, a key measure of a software vendor's performance, declined nearly 27 percent from last year. In mid-November, Oracle had warned that those revenues would be down 20 percent rather than down 15 percent as it had earlier forecast.

"It was pretty much as advertised from the standpoint of our model," said Merrill Lynch analyst Chris Shilakes, who said his estimates were slightly more bearish than the company's actual results. *Reuters*

Honda to roll out small cars in China

TOKYO—Honda Motor Co., Japan's No. 2 carmaker, will reportedly start producing small passenger cars in China from 2003, a move that will increase competition among major auto manufacturers for a presence in the country's huge market.

Honda plans to manufacture 20,000 to 30,000 units at its Guangzhou Honda Automobile Co. joint venture in southern China, the Nihon Keizai financial daily said in its Friday morning edition.

The carmaker declined to confirm the report.

With Japan's top automaker Toyota and General Motors of the United States making similar decisions, Honda's move would indicate a rush among industry heavyweights to take advantage of deregulation expected from China's accession to the World Trade Organization, the Nihon Keizai said.

Honda already produces the Accord sedan and will start making the Odyssey minivan from next year at the Guangzhou venture.

The Nihon Keizai said Honda plans to produce three small car models and hopes to gain 10 percent of the Chinese small car market. *AP*

DISCLOSURES

THE BOARD of **Ayala Corp.** has approved the declaration of a regular cash dividend of 3 centavos a share corresponding to the second semester ending Dec. 31. Record date is on Jan. 10, 2002 payable on Feb. 11, 2002.

* * *

BENPRES Holdings Corp. has clarified that **Bayan Telecommunications Inc.** continues to be open to discussions with potential partners for its cellular license and has not concluded any arrangement with any party.

* * *

THE BOARD of **RFM Corp.** has approved the purchase of 408,772,385 common shares owned by **WP Argosy Ltd.** at P2.57 a share by way of treasury shares.

* * *

GLOBE Telecom Inc. has approved the issuance of a total of 8,855,476 common shares out of its authorized and unissued common shares to **DeTeAsia Holding Gmbh, Singapore Telecom International Pte. Ltd.** and **Ayala Corp.** *Compiled by Ray Leyesa, PDI Research*

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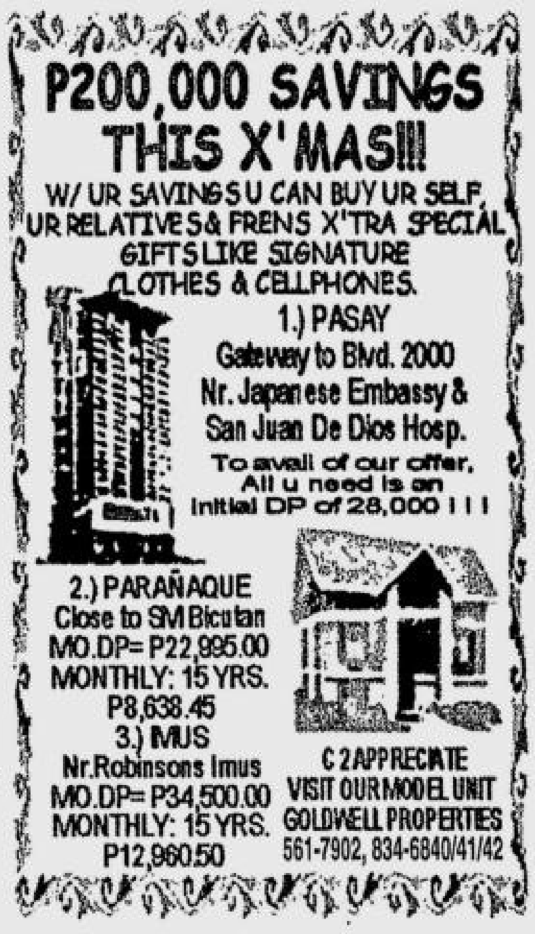
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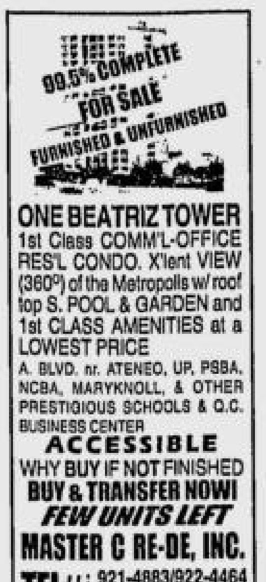
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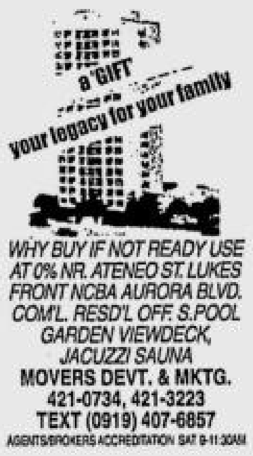
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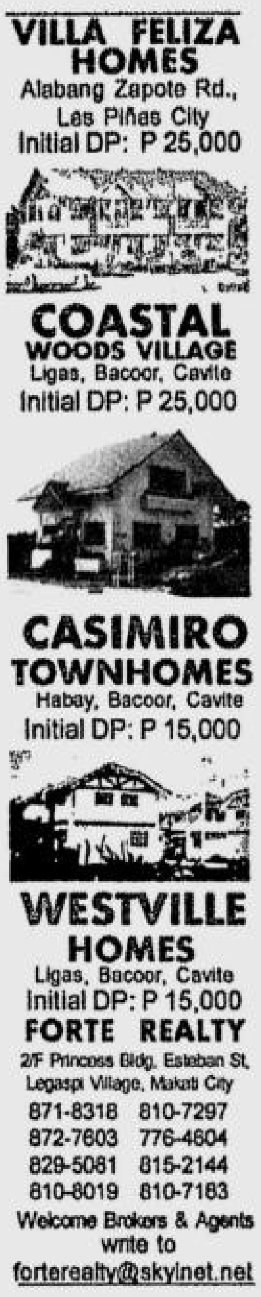
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on 768 EDSA across GMA 7 Bldg bes DILG 75sqm @P249 call Ethel or Janet 922-8877/922-8880

Store 20m² 0459826237

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

CARS

BMW

'91 BMW 520i 24V Sunroof '17 Mags Trade Ok 721-0317

FORD

2001 Sport Trac 721-0317

'98 Navigator 0917-5223756

F150 850T RUSH 826-9288

HYUNDAI

2002 BN Starex 721-0317

KIA

Besta Van P250T (Neg) 671-3535 / 733-2507 / 0917-8472716

Kia Pregio '98 P300T neg 9322234 Cell 09193569597 Batasan QC

MITSUBISHI

'90 Pajero P365 721-0317

NISSAN

00Safari16Tkm 1.18M 7432018

Safari 2000 9241833/35

Sentra 96EX Wellkept A1 238T Neg Lo/Km T5515491

TOYOTA

93 TCorla A1 GLI 521-6227

'96 LCruiser Dubai 7210317

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CARS FOR RENT

L3•Cars• 9273453 4538295

Bnew L3 8533103/09163443087

BNEW VAN 8254058/8261045

BrdalMB/Vans9296250;4535288

BRIDAL CSTR CAR 8955627

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CARS FOR RENT

Cars/Vans 4 Rent 8203894

HONDA MB100 8908668

IT/HIACE 9136710/4333682

L300 T7411356

MB HIAce L3 Urvan 8257135

SELF-DRIVE
New CARS/VANS-ALL BRANDS
ABC 5368822/3039789

Van A1-Con 12Str 433-2161

WANTED TO BUY

BUYING USED CARS 8990215

CAR LOAN

1.5% Fast Car Loan 3677523/24

2% w/o Taking Car 8966633

2% w/o taking car 7262780

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 3732083

2% w/oTaking Car 3646928

X-Mas Cash Problems?
Car Sangla • Instant!
WHILE-U-WAIT
Inquire: 9241254/ 9259121/ 9264160 We Also Buy Cars

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

PETS

Dog Trainer 09192050952

MINI-PINCH 2 YRS OLD DANNY 9128063 4224374

PUG USA-Line 7431689

Shi-Tzu 4F Champline 09198074630 • 044-6681590

Shitzu ChLine 2mo w/papers &vaccine M15T F18T 8215165

Siberian Husky, Golden Retriever, Boston Terier Pups Jetdog Kennel Call / Text 0917-5348096

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Dane 0917-5348096

SPORTING GOODS

B.Table B/New w/Accessories • 8014494 • 8020566 •

Imported Billiard 22T, 35T Complete Acc's. 8618714/16 8613123 / 8613125

New Billiard P18.5T P22T P25T Ok C.Card 781-9453

WANTED TO BUY

ANY ROLEX
Buy / Sell / Pawn / Repair
Tel# 804-0484 • 834-2886

B/SELL FUL PD EDUC PLAN 7137284•09177939632

BUYING ROLEX
others, High Price CASH CALL 09178142309/7269687

Partly used Educ 6469097

Buy/Pawn Diamonds T834-2886

SALE EDUC'L PLAN 8061574

MISCELLANEOUS

BARBER SHOP EQUIPMENT Impld Gd's 2nd hnd BRBR's CHAIR MARK II MDL 679 & HND MASSAGE MACHINES. PLS. C'TACT CRISTY Tel526-7325 ; 526-4096, 10-6:00PM

Bnew Cent. Water Pump Set Diesel Engine 4.8KW Impt Fr Germany T22,000 Each Tel 682-1545 • 0917-5180145

Executive Aircraft B55 BeechCraft Baron G Pass Fax 02 8509018 For Info

Hardwood Posts for Sale 3 to 5 inches diameter,9 feet long round eucalyptus decay-resistant and insect-resistant treated posts. Only P300 per post. Art at 696-0345 or Cip at 9215770/0917-530-5555

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

MISCELLANEOUS

HUGE GARAGE SALE
Sat. 15 #7 Rd.21 Proj 8 QC 9514039 9262589 furn etc.

IMPORTED TILES
from China & Italy!
50-60% DISCOUNT!
CLOSE OUT SALE!
homogenous tiles, natural granite stone Call 4576463 0917-2544429 Isabel Co

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

FEMALE

Wanted: Yaya/ Hse Maids Int'l Cook 660-4589

MALE/FEMALE

10 Trainors 50 Mrktg Asst 18y&up col grad/undergrad apply 508 East Twr Phil Stk Ex Exchange Rd Ortigas Ctr Pasig 12-2pm Dec15&16 only look for Tita Clemens

CARE GIVER T5280730

OFC STAFF 9134470 ARMI

Urgent!!! OFC STAFF Start ASAP 4398049 Look for Eve

Newly Expanding Company is in need of a High Calibre Individuals: (Salary: P8,000-P12,000 with Part-Time)
1. **Clerks**
Experience not required
2. **Marketing Executive**
With good presentation skills, experience not required
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With good communication skills
4. **Pharmacist - Licensed**
(For Part-Time)
FULL TIME: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Part Time: 9 AM-12:30 PM/1:30-5 PM/ 6:30-8:30 PM
Interested Parties Call:
892-3031; 892-3603; 892-3202
Address: Unit 2411 Herrera Tower Herrera Street, Salcedo Village Makati City

PUBLIC NOTICES

ANNOUNCEMENT

Specialized in USA/ Japan /Canada/ Europe & other Int'l Tourist VISA & Canadian/ Australian/ New Zealand Immg./ Student VISA Asst. Call Mrkn Main Office, 934-2070/ 71/ 72 Mla. Branch 522-8390/ 95

AUCTION SALE

C.Y. Lopez Pawnshop Inc.
#233 BUENDIA SHOPPING PLAZA SEN.GIL PUYAT AVE. MAKATI CITY; #602 JP RIZAL ST.,MAKATI CITY; #15 GEN. SANTOS AVE., LOWER BICUTAN, TAGUIG; REAL ST. ALMANZA UNO LAS PINAS CITY will hold an Auction Sale on •December 22, 2001• at 9:00A.M. including all items pawned up to July 2001.
V.Zamora Jr.
Lic. Auctioneer

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

EARN & TRAVEL 09196165084

EARN 15-20T PART/FULL TIME+TRVL & TRNG 8691108

EARN FR HOME 8531008/09178311728

EARN XTRA 15T FLEX HRS+INTL TRNG+TRVL 8319269.

GRANTS 4 BSNSS, NGO, expt, impt, Scholarships etc. (035)225-4870 / (0919)8559630

RTW 4 Tiange Bazar3738821

RTW P28up Wsale 727-4934

WANTED
Wholesaler & Retailer
Tel. 8202777/09198669171

PERSONAL

NOVENA TO THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS AND SAINT JUDE

May the most Sacred Heart of Jesus be praised, blessed, loved, adored and glorified throughout the whole world now and forever. Amen.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pray for us.

St. Jude, worker of miracles, helper for the helpless, pray for us.

Say nine times a day for nine days. Prayer will be answered by the eighth day, it has never failed.

Thank you very much, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Jude, for favor granted.

AMERICAN BUYING STOCKLOTS . GARMENTS IN MANILA DECEMBER 18 & 19, 2001

Call Nelson V. For appointments.
Send samples beforehand.
They will be returned.

Hongsan Grand Allied Buying International
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Quezon City
Tel. Nos. 741-3652 to 53, 743-4974 to 75
Fax Nos. 743-4972, 742-2916

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEART CENTER
East Avenue, Quezon City 1000 Philippines • Telephone 925-24-01

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY & TO BID

The Philippine Heart Center (PHC) invites sealed written bids, re: a) 1 set Sleep Machine; b) 1 set Neurocom Balance Master System; c) 1 unit Intra-Aortic Balloon Pump; d) 1 unit Pulse Oximeter & e) 1 unit Rigid Bronchoscope.

Only duly accredited bidders/suppliers will be allowed to participate in the bidding.

List of requirements to be submitted:

1. Letter of Intent/co. profile	5. Financial Statement (last 2 yrs.)
2. SEC registration	6. ITR (last 2 yrs.)
3. Bus. License	7. Location Map of Office
4. List of clients	8. Brochures of machines

****for add'l requirement, pls inquire at purchasing div. @922-0574 & look for Noemi****

All interested bidders/suppliers must submit their accreditation documents on or before Jan. 8, 2002 at Purchasing Division.

The PHC reserves the right to disqualify any prospective bidder/s if found that they have submitted falsified documents and/or information and the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at anytime prior to award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder/s.

(Sgd.) ROMEO J. SANTOS, M.D.
Chairman, PBAC

(PDI--Dec. 15, 16, 17, 22, 23 & 24, 2001)

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS BUT ONCE.

Read it every Sunday with the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

JOB MARKET

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. (632) 920-6401 • (632) 920-6446
E-mail: *sssemail@info.com.ph* • Web site *http://www.sss.gov.ph*

NOTICE

Please get in touch with the Members Assistance Center, Social Security System (SSS), East Avenue, Quezon City or at any SSS office nearest your place of residence and file your death claim within 90 days upon publication, if you are:

	NAME OF BENEFICIARY	LAST KNOWN ADDRESS	NAME OF SSS MEMBERS	DATE OF DEMISE
1)	Lita U. Abalos	Unknown	Rodolfo T. Abalos SS No. 03-4761768-0	October 14, 2001
2)	Carmelita Zaragoza	Unknown	Romeo M. Alejandria SS No. 03-3499372-8	October 8, 2001
3)	Emelita Bristol	Brgy. Sto. Angel, San Pablo City	Rolando Almario SS No. 03-2333708-1	September 23, 2001
4)	Ricardo Anieve	38 Tampoy St., Marulas, Valenzuela, Metro Manila	Billy Anieve SS No. 03-8587138-1	October 13, 1999
5)	Mercy Sanosa	Unknown	Diosdado Aquino SS No. 03-6483433-6	June 23, 2001
6)	Gennie (Jenny) Arcilla and her 3 minor children	Vincentian Hills, Angono, Rizal	Felipe B. Arcilla SS No. 05-0055985-7	March 29, 2000
7)	Delia D. Badion	3560 Buenos Aires St., Sta. Mesa, Manila	Edgardo N. Badion SS No. 03-8260691-5	February 24, 2000
8)	Celia Alanza	Brgy. Canjusa, Pulupandan, Negros Occidental	Ricardo Bason SS No. 07-0352397-8	October 9, 1998
9)	Arnulfo Cacayuran	Unknown	Alfredo Cacayuran SS No. 03-3062768-7	October 4, 1999
10)	Sherly Y. Canete	Ermita, Manila	Allan B. Canete SS No. 03-2650001-9	November 4, 2001
	Gloria L. Canete	Bernabe Cmpd., Pulanglupa, Las Piñas City		
11)	Remigio C. Conteno	Brgy. Bogtong, Malasiqui, Pangasinan	Vrazil Cunanan Centeno SS No. 02-1267959-6	September 14, 2000
12)	Nenita Col	Polomolok, South Cotabato	Felizardo Col	May 31, 2001
13)	Ambrocio Ibig	alleged deceased	Cresencia Ibig SS No. 03-3663351-0	February 14, 2001
14)	Orlando Legacion Sr.	Gaboc, Mercedez, Camarines Norte	Orlando Legacion Jr. SS No. 03-9729308-3	August 5, 2001
15)	Erlinda Marasigan	Makati City	Norberto Marasigan SS No. 03-0825722-5	July 6, 2001
16)	Felicidad H. Marquez	Unknown	Manuel Marquez SS No. 03-1078319-8	August 16, 2001
17)	Nancy Mendez	265 Int. 7, Lakandula St., Tondo, Manila	Gaudencio A. Mendez SS No. 03-3859718-8	August 21, 2001
18)	Loreta C. Nebril	2039 F. Munoz St., Malate, Manila	Wilfredo Nebril SS No. 03-3233977-9	June 15, 2000
19)	Vicenten Paes	Unknown	Enriquita Paes SS No. 07-1011995-1	August 10, 2001
20)	Herminia Pagulayan	Unknown	Ernesto D. San Jose SS No. 03-2015286-1	September 10, 2001
21)	Edna Siao	Jasaan, Misamis Oriental	Vicente M. Siao SS No. 08-0454260-9	October 16, 2000
22)	Ma. Sisang Sta. Ana and Nene Ortiz	Unknown	Danilo Sta. Ana SS No. 03-3595769-5	October 28, 2000
23)	Nena, Helen & Ferdinand	Iloilo	Victor M. Tabaniag SS No. 03-0358366-4	May 28, 2001
24)	Rene Capilitan Toledo	Manila	Nimfa C. Toledo SS No. 06-0913723-5	July 16, 2001
25)	Crisostomo Unabia	Unknown	Mercedes B. Unabia SS No. 06-0810319-2	September 12, 2001

-----Nothing Follows------

(PDI - Dec. 15, 2001)

RISE GROUP OF COMPANIES RISE E-COMMERCE SYSTEMS ADVISORY

TO ALL OUR SUBSCRIBERS, STAKEHOLDERS AND BUSINESS PARTNERS:

In our relentless drive for continuous improvement to keep pace with the fast-changing technological environment so that we can bring and maintain consumers' empowerment and poverty alleviation in the forefront of our corporate action agenda, we have acquired new computer hardwares, softwares and systems, which calls for additional and bigger working space locations.

In this regard, we would like to inform you that for the remaining days of December 2001 up to January 15, 2002, we will be busy with the installations and adjustment activities as we transfer the facilities of our Information Technology Group (ITG) to its new office location at Unit 1709, 17/F Jollibee Plaza, Ortigas, Pasig City. Simultaneously, our NCR operations and Rise Finance and Management Corporation will be setting up office at the 8/F, Penthouse of Noah's Arc Building, Escolta, Binondo.

There will be a slight disorder as we engage ourselves with these improvements and adjustment activities. We, therefore, beg for your patience and kind understanding for all the inconveniences you may encounter during the said period.

Rest assured that we are doing all these improvements with the consumers' and subscribers' best interest in mind.

As we continuously affirm our commitment to you, we also make sure that such is guaranteed by our voluntary TRUST FUND mechanism being managed by United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB). Your welfare is our paramount concern.

Thank you very much for your continuous trust and confidence in us.

Rise Group of Companies
Rise E-Commerce Systems, Inc.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
MAYNILA, PILIPINAS

PREQUALIFICATION, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION/ELIGIBILITY

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites interested general building contractors currently accredited with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for pre-qualification/eligibility and if later found eligible/qualified, to bid for the project described below:

Project Title : Renovation and Extension of the Bangko Sentral Cotabato Branch (Phase 2)
Scope of Work : Furnishing of all materials, labor, tools, equipment, technical supervision and other services and performing all testing and other operations necessary for the construction and completion of the project all in accordance with the requirements of the approved plans and specifications and subject to the terms and conditions of the Contract.
Project Location : BSP - Cotabato Branch Sinsuat corner Quezon Avenue, Cotabato City
Approved Budget : Pesos Twenty Million Five Hundred Seven Thousand Two Hundred Two and 26/100 (P20,507,202.26)
Source of Funding : Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Minimum Requirement (Criteria)
PCAB License/IAC Classification : IAC Category at least Medium (Building and Industrial Plant) for the past three (3) consecutive years
Contractor's Construction Experience in Similar Project : Has completed in the past three (3) years at least three (3) construction/renovation projects of similar Architectural and Engineering (A&E) works one of which costs not less than Ten Million Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P10,500,000.00) such as construction/renovation involving architectural (including finishing, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical works of commercial or institutional buildings requiring medium to high end finishes and good workmanship (projects may include offices, commercial centers, educational institutions, hotels and other of similar or greater complexity to the BSP's required project).
Credit Line/Cash Deposit Certificate Requirements : Pesos Two Million Fifty Thousand (P 2,050,000.00)
Prequalification/Eligibility Statement Forms
Cost of Forms : Two Hundred Pesos per set (P200.00/set)
Date and Time of Issuance : December 07 to 21, 2001, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 nn and 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Place of Issuance and Submission of Accomplished Eligibility/Statement Documents : PBAC Secretariat, Room 204 (Tel. No. 524-7011 loc. 3143) Second Floor - Five Storey Building BSP Complex A. Mabini corner P. Ocampo (formerly V. Cruz) Streets, Manila
Deadline of Submission : January 4, 2002, 4:00 PM
Notice of Eligibility/Ineligibility
Date and Time of Issuance : January 24, 2002, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 nn and 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Place of Issuance : PBAC Secretariat Room 204
Bid/Tender Documents : Shall be issued only to eligible/prequalified contractors upon payment of the non-refundable cost of the documents
Cost of Documents/Place of Issuance : Five Thousand Pesos per set (P5,000.00/set) PBAC Secretariat, Room 204
Date and Time of Issuance : January 24 to 25, 2002, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 nn and 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Pre-bid Conference
Date and Time : February 4, 2002, 9:30 a.m.
Venue : BMD Conference Room, Second Floor - Five Storey Building BSP Complex
Submission and Opening of Bids
Deadline/Venue of Submission : February 25, 2002, 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. PBAC Secretariat Room 204

Date, Time and Venue of Issuance of Bid Documents, Pre-Bid Conference and Deadline of Submission / Opening of Bids shall be confirmed in the Notice of Eligibility.

For inquiries, please call PBAC Secretariat - telephone no. 524-7011 local 3143.

Schedule for issuance of notice for eligibility/ineligibility up to deadline of submission of bids may be subject to change.

Guidelines stipulated in the provisions of PD1594 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, as amended and other applicable rules and regulations shall apply relative to pre-qualification/eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract.

BSP reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any defect or formality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any contractor/s whose bids is/are evaluated to be most advantageous to BSP. Furthermore, BSP is not obligated to compensate/indemnify the contractor for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award of contract will be made.

(Sgd.) MARCOS J. SIONGCO JR.
Chairman

(PDI – Dec. 7, 15 & 20, 2001)

ADHOC COMMITTEE FOR PICC PROJECTS

INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION / ELIGIBILITY

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites interested contractors to apply for pre-qualification/eligibility and if later found eligible/qualified, to bid for the project described below:

Project Title : Refurbishing of Swivel/Arm Chair - PICC Plenary Hall
Scope of Work : Work includes furnishing of all materials, labor, tools, equipment, services and other incidentals require to perform refurbishing of swivel/arm chair with loose seat cushion such as: (a) reupholstery with new fabric, including foam reinforcement following mechanism and (d) other works necessary to complete the project existing design; (b) repolishing of steel base - satin finish; (c) repair and oiling of swivel mechanism and (d) other works necessary to complete the project.
Project Location : PICC Complex, Pasay City
Approved Budget : Seven Million Eight Hundred Sixty Six Thousand Pesos (P 7,866,000.00)
Source of Funding : Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Minimum Requirement (Criteria)
Contractor's Experience in Similar Project : Contractor's Experience in Similar Project : Has been a furniture contractor for the past ten (10) years specializing in the fabrication, repair/refurbishing of upholstered seating and has completed at least three (3) projects of similar nature or greater complexity for the past seven (7) years each costing not less than four hundred thousand pesos (P 400,000.00). The contractor must have a warehouse/workshop with minimum storage area of 1,000 sq.mtr.
Credit Line/Cash Deposit Certificate Req't : Seven Hundred Eighty Six Thousand Six Hundred (P786,600.00)
Prequalification / Eligibility Statement Forms
Cost of Forms : Two Hundred Pesos per set (P 200.00/set)
Date and Time of Issuance : Dec. 03 to 17, 2001 / 9:30 am to 12:00 nn & 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm
Place of Issuance and Submission of Accomplished Eligibility / Statement Documents : AHCPP Secretariat Rm 204 (Tel No. 524-7011 loc 3143) 2nd Floor - Five Storey Building BSP Complex A. Mabini corner P. Ocampo (former V. Cruz) Streets, Manila
Deadline of Submission : December 21, 2001 4:00 pm
Notice of Eligibility / Ineligibility
Date and Time of Issuance : January 17, 2002 / 9:30 am to 12:00 nn & 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm
Place of Issuance : AHCPP Secretariat Rm 204
Bid / Tender Documents : Shall be issued only to eligible/prequalified contractors upon payment of the non-refundable cost of the documents.
Cost of Documents / Place of Issuance Five Hundred Pesos per set (P 500.00/set) AHCPP Secretariat Rm 204
Date and Time of Issuance : January 21, 2002 / 9:30 am to 12:00 nn & 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm
Pre-bid Conference
Date and Time : January 21, 2002 9:30 am
Venue : BMD Conference Room / 2nd Floor - Five Storey Building BSP Complex
Submission and Opening of Bids
Deadline/Venue of Submission : January 29, 2002 / 9:00 am to 10:00 am / AHCPP Secretariat Room 204

Date, Time and Venue of Issuance of Bid Documents, Pre-Bid Conference and Deadline of Submission/ Opening of Bids shall be confirmed in the Notice of Eligibility.

Guidelines stipulated in the provisions of Executive Order No. 262 Series of 2000 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, as amended and other applicable rules & regulations shall apply relative to pre-qualification/eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and awards of contract.

BSP reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any defect or formality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any contractor/s whose bid/s is/are evaluated to be most advantageous to BSP.

Furthermore, BSP is not obligated to compensate/indemnify the contractor for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids nor does in guarantee that an award of contract will be made.

(Sgd.) Vicente B. Valdepeñas, Jr.
Chairman

(Sgd.) Juan Quintos, Jr.
Co-Chairman

(PDI--Dec. 1 & 15, 2001)

Philippine Overseas Employment Administration

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Labor & Employment
POEA Bldg., Ortigas Avenue,
Cor. EDSA, Mandaluyong City 1501
P.O. Box 175 Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila
Tel. 7221144 • 7221155 • Email: info@poea.org.ph
Website: www.poea.org.ph

INVITATION TO BID

ITB No. 013-01

Series of 2001

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) is inviting all interested contractors to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid for:

CONSTRUCTION OF ONE-STOP PROCESSING CENTER BUILDING A & B

The approved budget for the contract works to quote is P1,500,000.00.

Submission of eligibility requirements will be on or before **December 19, 2001**.

Pre-bid conference shall be conducted on Wednesday, **December 19, 2001**, 2:30 p.m. at the Conference Room of the undersigned, 5th Floor, POEA Building, Ortigas Avenue, corner EDSA, Mandaluyong City.

Bid Forms shall be furnished by the POEA - Bids and Awards Committee through the General Services and Property Division (GSPD) at the 5th Floor, POEA Building, Ortigas Avenue, corner EDSA, Mandaluyong City upon payment of non-refundable fee of Two Hundred Pesos (P200.00) only.

Sealed bids shall be received the POEA - Bids and Awards Committee starting 8:00 a.m. but not later than 10:00 a.m. on Friday, **December 21, 2001** and immediately thereafter the sealed envelopes will be opened. Bids must be accompanied with a bidder's bond equivalent to five percent (5%) of the total bid price either in the form of Cash, Manager's Check or Surety Bond callable on demand issued by the GSIS or any insurance company accredited by the Insurance Commissioner, or a combination thereof. Bidder's bond shall be valid for one hundred twenty (120) calendar days following the opening of bids.

The POEA neither assumes any obligations whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of their bid, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

The POEA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formalities or defects therein or to accept such bids as may be considered most advantageous to the POEA. All awards by the Bids and Awards Committee are subject to the final approval of the POEA Administrator.

(Sgd.) **LORNA O. FAJARDO**
Deputy Administrator, and
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Dec. 15 & 16, 2001)

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

NOTICE TO DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED RURAL BANK OF TINAMBAC (Camarines Sur), INC. (RBTI)

1. Starting December 18, 2001, the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) thru its duly authorized representatives shall receive claims for insured deposits maintained with the closed **Rural Bank of Tinambac (Camarines Sur), Inc.**
2. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the premises of the said closed bank from December 18 to 20, during office hours, where PDIC representatives are stationed to accept claims and entertain queries of depositors.

   After December 20, 2001, all depositors can file their claims personally at the PDIC Office from Monday to Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., or by mail addressed to —

   The Manager
   Claims Processing Center
   Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation
   2228 Chino Roces Avenue, 1231 Makati City

3. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to our representatives when filing their claims:
   a. Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook and/or Certificate of Time Deposit; and
   b. Latest Identification document (ID) bearing the depositor's signature

   Other documents may be required by our representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.

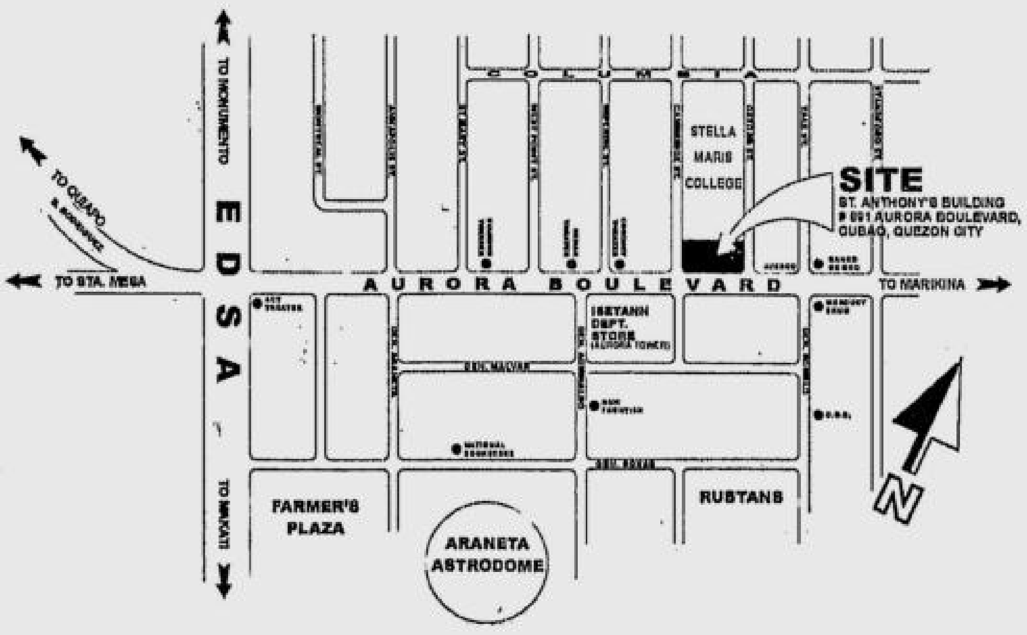
3. Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 3591 as amended by R.A. 7400, the prescriptive date (last day) for filing of claims for insured deposits in the closed Rural Bank of Tinambac (Camarines Sur), Inc. is on May 6, 2003. After May 6, 2003, PDIC as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

(PDI – Dec. 15 & 17, 2001)

INQUIRER CLASSIFIEDS

Aurora branch is now open to serve your Classified Ads requirements.
For inquiries, please call **912-9008** to **11.**



MORE ACCOUNTABLE

New coalition formed for new world order

LONDON—Amid rising violent protest at the merciless advance of globalization, a new coalition of civic leaders, business moguls and international heavyweights is launching a new movement here aimed at making the global system more accountable.

The Commission for Globalization brings together such luminaries as Mikhail Gorbachev, Desmond Tutu, George Soros and Queen Noor of Jordan in a broad umbrella grouping aimed at channeling concerns of grassroots protestors to the world's powerbrokers.

Seattle, Genoa, Doha . . . The evidence from recent global forums points to a growing class of the disillusioned and disenfranchised who feel that the global political and economic system is an undemocratic juggernaut steamrollering the interests of the underdog.

The events of Sept. 11 and the war on terrorism have merely reinforced the need to reach the disaffected and "work for a just and equitable world order," according to Jim Garrison, the chief organizer behind the commission.

"The issues pertaining to globalization are attracting huge protest from Seattle to Genoa to Doha," Garrison said.

"People are realizing that globalization is affecting everybody everywhere and that the institutions of governance are basically relics from the immediate aftermath of World War II," he said.

As for the war on terrorism, he says the commission will support it, while working at the same time to build "an equally powerful and enduring international coalition that will work for a just and equitable world order."

He said, "The war on terrorism will not be solved unless we solve the roots that cause terrorism."

Delegates to the commission will bring a series of concrete proposals aimed at tackling issues of inequality, democracy, transparency and accountability.

Billionaire financier George Soros is to call for new IMF funds to be dedicated to the provision on a global scale of public goods to deal with issues such as AIDS.

Other policy actions will target intellectual property, genetic engineering, global security and poverty elimination. Concrete suggestions will be taken to heads of state and other decision-makers.

The message is even getting through to central bankers. At a forum on global economic issues earlier this week, Bank of England governor Eddie George expressed some sympathy for peaceful anti-globalization protestors.

"We cannot ignore the fact that the benefits (of globalization) do not extend to every sector of our society," he said. "At the global level—and it is here that I think some of the peaceful anti-globalization protestors have a real point —many of the poorest, least-developed countries are effectively excluded."

Garrison said it would be easy to judge whether the commission has succeeded or not.

If it manages to take grass roots causes to government and launch consultation "which is more than simple dialogue for the TV cameras, then I believe the protests will wither away." *AFP*

Japanese banks health guaranteed

TOKYO—It is "pointless" to worry about the health of Japanese banks because the financial watchdog is ready to inject funds into them in any crisis, the Financial Services Agency's head said Friday.

"We are paying close attention to the health of the banks. The pessimistic view of the banks is pointless," Hakuo Yanagisawa, who is also Japan's financial affairs minister, said in a speech to business executives here.

"We will not refrain from making a capital injection into banks if there is a systemic crisis but this is not the situation," Yanagisawa said.

"Injections are not needed for banks with double digit capital-adequacy ratios" compared to the minimum 8 percent set by the Basel-based Bank for International Settlements, he said.

Major banks posted an average capital-adequacy ratio of 11.1 percent as of end-September against 11.7 percent at end-March, he noted.

"The 0.6-percentage-point decline was triggered by the recent falls in stock prices, when the Nikkei 225 stock index fell to 9,774 points" during the six-month period, Yanagisawa said.

In the first half to September, the Nikkei-225 average of the Tokyo Stock Exchange lost around 25 percent in value as Japan slumped into recession.

"Major banks will show a capital adequacy ratio of at least 10 percent at end-March, assuming they dispose of much of their bad loans by then," he said.

"Foreign governments are viewing the banks' bad loan disposal using their own standards, but I believe our assessment is appropriate," he said. *AFP*

A STRIKING worker of Daewoo Motors Sales shouts a slogan during a rally to protest the company's massive layoff scheme at Pupyong west of Seoul. Daewoo Motor Sales revealed plans to shed about 1,000 jobs, or 25 percent, of its 4,000-strong workforce in a bid to help make its takeover more attractive to General Motors Corp. The headband reads "Unity". AP

South Korea joblessness flat in Nov.

SEOUL—South Korea's unemployment rate stayed at a moderate level in November, unchanged from the previous month, which economists said reflected government fiscal efforts to keep joblessness in check.

The unemployment rate was 3.5 percent in November after adjustments for seasonal factors, the National Statistical Office said Friday.

But the rate was expected to rise through early next year as graduates enter the job market and as the agriculture and forestry sectors cut jobs in the winter off-season, government officials and economists said.

"It (jobless rate) could rise to 4 percent before peaking," Paul Alapat, an economist at Nomura International, said.

South Korea posted a better-than-expected economic growth of 1.8 percent for the July-September period from a year earlier, quelling forecasts that the economy was sliding into recession.

The November unemployment rate decreased from 3.9 percent in the same month a year earlier.

"The absolute number is not high," said Choi Sook-hee, an economist of Samsung Economic Research Institute. *Reuters*

Hewlett deal launches family, board spats

NEW YORK—Hewlett-Packard Co. and Compaq Computer Corp. fought back on Thursday to defend their $22.8-billion merger plan against strident opposition led by Walter Hewlett, a son of one of the founders.

The rift between Hewlett-Packard management and its founder's heirs widened as a member of the computer and printer maker's board of directors resigned from a foundation led by Walter Hewlett—upset that the conflict would trigger what he called an ill-advised proxy fight.

The resignation by Richard Hackborn, a Hewlett-Packard director and staunch supporter of the deal, from the Hewlett Foundation came after Walter Hewlett sent a letter to the boards of both companies that sharply criticized the deal.

In his letter, Walter Hewlett, also a Hewlett-Packard board member, said the merger would likely be rejected if there were a shareholder vote. The letter came one month after he first spoke out against the deal.

There is "enormous unhappiness" about the deal and a "very high probability" that it would be defeated if it came to a stockholder vote, he said in a Dec. 12 letter to the boards of Hewlett-Packard and Compaq.

"The handwriting is on the wall and it is clear. I urge that we serve the best interests of all our shareholders by a speedy, mutual unwinding of this transaction," he wrote. The letter was filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on Thursday.

Compaq responded in its own letter to Walter Hewlett on Thursday, saying the board of directors was confident the deal would be approved by shareholders of both companies.

"We are confident that over the coming months, the shareholders of both companies will recognize the value of the merger and give their approval," it said.

The merger of Hewlett-Packard and Compaq has been under pressure almost since it was announced on Sept. 4.

Critics of the deal, including Walter Hewlett, investors and some Wall St. analysts, have said it will dilute Hewlett-Packard's printing business by creating a larger computer division.

Families fight deal

Hackborn quit the Hewlett-Packard board and called Walter Hewlett's sentiments "ill-advised."

"Sadly, Walter Hewlett's decision to wage an ill-advised proxy fight opposing HP's merger with Compaq deeply conflicts with my and the HP board's belief that the merger represents the very best way to deliver the value and growth HP's shareowners, customers and employees deserve," Hackborn said in a statement.

In November, when Hewlett first announced his opposition to the deal, Hackborn—credited with pioneering the company's very profitable LaserJet business—taped a message of support for the deal and sent it to shareholders.

"The two sides are digging in. Does it change anything? I don't think so," said Dan Niles, an analyst at Lehman Brothers.

No date had yet been set for a vote by shareholders, but Merrill Lynch analyst Steven Fortuna said in a research note on Thursday that he expected the vote to take place in early March. The companies also were waiting for regulatory approval in the United States and Europe.

The conflict creates an uncertain atmosphere for both employees and customers, analysts say.

"Clearly it would be much better for all concerned if we could have a clear delineation one way or another," said George Elling, an analyst at Deutsche Banc Alex. Brown who favors the deal.

An internal survey obtained by Reuters of Hewlett-Packard employees' support for the merger found that employees' feelings about the deal wavered in November but had come back a bit this month.

About 76 percent of 1,300 employees surveyed on Dec. 10 said they were supportive of the deal, down from 84 percent employee support the company had enjoyed in September when the deal was first announced.

In November, when Walter Hewlett first opposed the deal, support was at a low, with 55 percent of 1,170 Hewlett workers saying they were for the deal and 45 percent saying they were against it.

A Hewlett-Packard spokeswoman said Walter Hewlett's actions created uncertainty and concern among both employees and customers.

"Our survey data suggest that before Walter's opposition to the deal was announced, these constituencies were quite supportive of the merger and even after his actions were announced, these constituents are still supportive of the merger," she said.

Walter Hewlett's comments came after the Packard family trust, HP's largest shareholder with a 10.4-percent stake, said it would vote against the deal, uniting the families of HP's founders and creating a voting block of 18 percent.

The Hewlett family, which owns a 5-percent stake in Hewlett-Packard, said last month it would vote against the merger, dealing the first major blow to Fiorina's vision of a computer, printer and services powerhouse to rival International Business Machines Corp.

In addition, she noted that 82 percent of shareholders had yet to indicate their preliminary vote decisions, and that the company intended to bring the merger to a vote. *Reuters*

Argentina economy official quits

BUENOS AIRES—Argentina scurried to meet a $1.1-billion payment deadline Friday in a bid to stave off default on its huge public debt, as a key player in the effort to revive the country's battered economy gave up his post.

Deputy Economy Minister Daniel Marx would leave his post Friday, government sources said late Thursday.

Marx reportedly clashed with his superior, Economy Minister Domingo Cavallo, in past weeks notably when Cavallo introduced strict measures aimed at stemming capital flight out of the country.

Argentina has been in recession for nearly four years and is desperately trying to avoid defaulting on Friday's debt payment, as the default could hurt its ability to raise additional funds through bond sales and on the global bond market.

An additional payment of nearly $1 billion is due at month's end on the nation's $132-billion debt.

The country's financial situation got worse 10 days ago, when the International Monetary Fund delayed a crucial disbursement of $1.264 billion until the government imposes promised austerity measures and tax reforms.

Disgruntled workers staged a general strike across Argentina Thursday as President Fernando de la Rua sought support from his predecessor, Carlos Menem, for a solution to the country's economic malaise.

After their hour-long meeting, which also included Cavallo, Menem said De la Rua agreed that the devaluation of Argentina's currency, the peso, would be a disaster.

Menem, who heads the opposition Peronist party and recently announced his official presidential campaign for 2003, said he pushed instead the idea of officially scrapping the peso in favor of the US dollar.

"We will study the proposals, including the one on dollarization," presidential official Nicolas Gallo said at a joint news conference with Menem. *AFP*

EU upbeat on growth

BRUSSELS—European Union finance ministers on Thursday reiterated their confidence in the region's economic prospects, as they reached some more small milestones along the bloc's road to a single capital market.

Europe's economy will stage a gradual recovery next year under its own steam, the ministers said in a draft statement, due to be issued at a two-day EU summit starting on Friday.

"Present conditions are for a gradual recovery in the course of 2002. The economic fundamentals are sound in the EU, and growth will come from domestic sources," the statement said.

The draft was careful to avoid any impression that it was leaning on the European Central Bank, which has command of interest rates in the 12 nations of the common currency bloc.

When EU leaders last met at a summit in Ghent in October, there was controversy when a draft statement suggested the European Central Bank had room to lower interest rates. Since then, the ECB has since cut rates by a further half percentage point to 3.25 percent. *Reuters*

Maria Teresa Carlson
Beauty and Tragedy
Maria Teresa Carlson lived a life of highs and lows up to her sudden, shocking death
SUNDAY INQUIRER MAGAZINE
GET TO KNOW SOME REAL PEOPLE
December 16, 2001 Issue

WORSE THAN IN '97 CRISIS

Singapore jobless rate seen rising to 4.5%

SINGAPORE—Singapore's unemployment rate is expected to rise to 4.5 percent this year—exceeding levels during the Asian financial crisis—and will worsen in 2002, the manpower ministry said Friday.

The city-state's deepening recession, induced by the US-led global economic slump, has hammered Singapore's workforce due to company closures, retrenchments and hiring freezes.

"With the protracted slump in global electronics and uncertainties in the US economy feeding deeper into the Singapore system, the positive earnings growth posted so far may come to a standstill when the year draws to a close as companies exercise wage restraint," the ministry said.

"Unemployment rate could rise to around 4.5 percent by the end of the year and is expected to worsen in the year ahead as the next batch of new entrants join the labor market, adding to the existing pool of job seekers," it said in a report.

This year's projected 4.5-percent unemployment rate will exceed the 4.4 percent recorded in 1998 at the height of the Asian financial crisis. During the crisis, Singapore was cushioned to some extent because of continuing strong technology exports to the United States.

Singapore, previously one of Asia's most vibrant economies, fell into a recession in mid-2001 and is facing an expected 3-percent contraction in its gross domestic product this year.

From January to September, 17,247 people were thrown out of jobs, nearly half of them in the three months to September alone when the unemployment rate accelerated to 3.8 percent, the ministry said.

An expected 25,000 people are expected to have been retrenched for the entire year.

More than 60 percent of those retrenched in the September quarter came from the manufacturing sector, which has borne the brunt of the downturn because of its dependence on electronics exports to the United States.

Last week, Singapore's National Wages Council issued new labor guidelines backing "severe" pay cuts to help companies ride out the recession, with retrenchments recommended only as a last resort.

AFP

Internet seen boosting productivity growth

WASHINGTON—Splashy websites like www.pets.com may have gone the way of the eight-track tape, but the Internet will continue to improve the daily lives of Americans over the next five years, say two prominent economists.

Broad sectors of the US economy will continue to migrate routine functions like billing and inventory management to the Internet, boosting productivity gains by one-quarter to one-half of one percent a year, say Brookings Institution economists Robert Litan and Alice Rivlin in a new book.

At that rate, a worker earning the US average of $36,000 a year would see his real income grow by $2,500 per year, Litan said.

"This is not a trivial gain. This is real money," Litan said Monday at a round-table discussion.

The Internet's real impact will not come from new dotcom businesses or retail sites like Amazon.com Inc., Litan and Rivlin argue in "Beyond the Dot.coms: The Economic Promise of the Internet."

Rather, the global computer network will increase productivity by transforming established industries like manufacturing and health care, which will be able to automate routine paperwork and track shipping online.

Governments will save money if citizens can find information and submit routine applications online, and the financial-services industry could save significantly if more people use electronic payments rather than personal checks, Litan and Rivlin say.

Even the trucking industry will likely become more efficient as central websites provide a more complete picture of what cargo capacity is available and at what prices.

The savings will total between $125 billion and $251 billion over the next five years, they say, nothing to sneeze at even in the United State's $10-trillion economy.

Litan and Rivlin reached their estimate after asking a range of experts to examine how various industries will likely use the Internet to their advantage over the next several years.

The result attempts to isolate the economic impact of the Internet from the economy as a whole.

No matter if the US economy remains mired in recession or bounces back, the gains in productivity will be real, they say.

Economists see the rate of productivity growth as a key quality-of-life indicator. When companies reap increased profits from more productive operations, they can afford to pay higher wages or lower the cost of their products, enabling workers to buy more.

An economy that increases productivity by a rate of 3 percent a year will double its real per capita income in 24 years.

Productivity grew at an annual rate of just under 3 percent between the end of World War II and 1973, when it slowed to around 1.25 percent, according to US government statistics cited in the book. Productivity growth picked up again in 1995, and grew at an average rate of 2.5 percent due in some measure to increased use of the Internet and other information technology, many economists believe.

Productivity growth has slowed along with the economy as a whole, the two noted Monday.

"The big question is whenever this recession does end, what will the future growth be like? Will it be a return to rapid growth, or somewhat less than that?" Rivlin said.

Increased security costs after the hijacking attacks of Sept. 11 could slow productivity growth in the near future as well, they said.

But the Internet will serve to boost productivity despite these factors, the two said.

Reuters

Aetna cuts 6,000 jobs

HARTFORD, Connecticut—Aetna Inc. is slashing 6,000 jobs, about 16 percent of its workforce, as the United States' largest health insurer struggles with rising medical costs and declining enrollment.

Most of the cuts will be in California, Georgia, Louisiana and the St. Louis area, company spokesperson Fred Laberge said Thursday. About 1,600 of the positions will be cut through attrition; the remaining 4,400 will come through layoffs.

Aetna will take a fourth-quarter charge of $125 million related to severance and associated costs.

It is the second December in a row that Aetna has announced sweeping changes and thousands of layoffs. Last year, the company cut 5,000 positions less than a week after selling its financial services and international businesses to Dutch conglomerate ING Group Inc.

Left to focus solely on its health business, Aetna has sought to shed unprofitable Medicare operations and limit its exposure to rapidly climbing health costs.

John Rowe, chair and chief executive officer, said the job cuts emphasized profitability.

"We must be sized to match the needs of our business," he said.

Laberge said stiff competition forced Aetna to exit several geographic markets. The decision applies only to health maintenance organizations, not dental, indemnity and preferred provider plans, he said.

"In some instances we were a small competitor compared with others," he said. "We were not able to price our product appropriately to be profitable."

Analyst John Rex of Bear Stearns Co. in New York said the changes are not entirely unwelcome, particularly in markets where Aetna has no significant share. "Some of that you want to go away," he said.

AP

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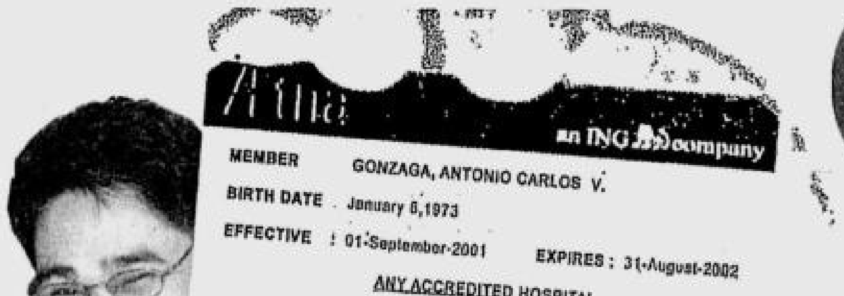

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NOTICE TO DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED RURAL BANK OF NARVACAN (Ilocos Sur), INC. (RBNI)

1. Starting **December 18, 2001**, the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) thru its duly authorized representatives shall receive claims for insured deposits maintained with the closed **Rural Bank of Narvacan (Ilocos Sur), Inc.**
2. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the premises of the said closed bank from **December 18 to 20, 2001** and **January 4 to 10, 2002**, Mondays thru Fridays, during office hours, where PDIC representatives are stationed to accept claims and entertain queries of depositors.

   After **January 10, 2002**, all depositors can file their claims personally at the PDIC office from Monday to Friday, **8:00 a.m.** to **5:00 p.m.**, or by mail addressed to—

   The Manager
   Claims Processing Center
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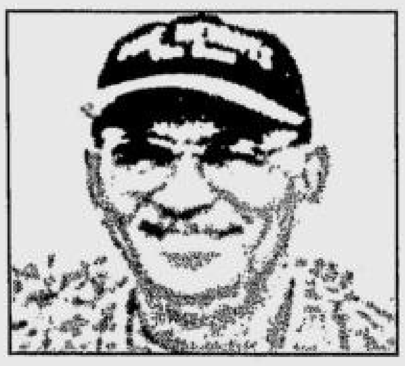
   2228 Chino Roces Avenue, 1231 Makati City
3. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to our representatives when filing their claims:
   a. Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook and/or Certificate of Time Deposit; and
   b. Latest identification document (ID) bearing the depositor's signature.

   Other documents may be required by our representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.
3. Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 3591 as amended by R.A. 7400, the prescriptive date (last day) for filing of claims for insured deposits in the closed Rural Bank of Narvacan (Ilocos Sur) Inc. is on **April 8, 2003**. After **April 8, 2003**, PDIC as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

(PDI – Dec. 15 & 17, 2001)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC



ANTONIO J. SANTOS

This person has a present pending estafa case before the Q.C. RTC Branch 218. Criminal Case No. Q01-104128. A bench warrant of arrest has been issued against this man.

Please furnish any information of the whereabouts of this man at Tel. Nos. **723-6293 • 144112002 • 0917-8171815.**

(PDI- Dec. 15, 2001)

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dti BUREAU OF
TRADE REGULATION AND
CONSUMER PROTECTION

NOTICE TO ALL BUSINESS NAME REGISTRANTS

Pursuant to Section 12(A) of Department Administrative Order No. 15 Series of 1990, the Department of Trade and Industry through the Bureau of Trade Regulation and Consumer Protection, cancels from the record all business name registrations which expired as of June 30, 2001 effective January 2, 2002.

Under the Business Name Law (Act No. 3883), as amended, owners or proprietors should renew their Business Name Registration upon expiration thereof.

This announcement serves as a formal notice to all concerned.
For strict compliance.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. MARIA TERESA ARAO-MAHIWO**
Director

(PDI – Dec. 15, 2001)

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Our Beloved Father

SUPREME COURT JUSTICE (RETIRED)
RICARDO JALBUENA FRANCISCO

Peacefully joined our Lord on December 14, 2001 at the age of 73.

Our mother **Felisa Tirona Francisco**

and we his children
Ray & Cosette Tanjuaquio
Maricris & Butch Palarca
Cori & Bobit Olanday
Enteng
Lito & Eena Imperial
Bibay & Reggie Francisco

Malou
Danny & Leah Magboo

and grandchildren
Trika & Miguel
Paolo & Mario
Robbie & Ria
Bryan
Monique & Denise
Raul, Regine, Rustin
Rozanne

Diego, Annika, Sofia

his sisters, **Banton & Iting**; brothers **Jose & Victor**; in-laws, nieces & nephews, & other relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose and joy of his soul.

His body lies in state at **Della Strada Church, La Vista**, Katipunan, Quezon City.

Interment will be announced later.

Please omit flowers. Donations to the ***Justice Ricardo Jalbuena Francisco*** *Endowment Fund will be deeply appreciated.*

For God
so loved
the world,
that He
gave His
only
begotten
Son, that
whoever
believes in
Him shall
not perish
but have
everlasting
life.
John 3:16

EUGENIA ANZURES vda. de TAN

of Quezon City & Bulacan, Bulacan
Joined her Creator on December 9, 2001
at the age of 82.

Her loving children and spouses, **Dra. Lita** and **Jimmy Santos, Benny** and **Virgie Anzures**; sisters **Lemy** and **Pining**; brother and spouse **Ruding** and **Pacing**; grandchildren, nephews, nieces, other relatives and friends request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel 5, La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Ave., Quezon City. Interment will be held on Sunday, December 16, 2001 at Bambang Cemetery, Bulacan, Bulacan at 7:00 a.m.

RODOLFO PUNZAL SUAREZ

April 1, 1927 - December 12, 2001
of Norzagaray, Bulacan
Former PNB Manager

Died in the Grace of our Lord at the Makati Medical Center. He is survived by his bereaved wife **Dr. Cecilia Albea Suarez**; children **Drs. Agnes Teresa & Michael Tolentino, Ronald Francis & Joan Mary Suarez, Maria Cristina,** and **Rodolfo Pocholo**; and grandchildren **Steven, Elizabeth** and **Kiara**. His remains lie in state at Mt. Carmel Church, Doña Juana Rodriguez Ave. (Broadway) New Manila, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, 18th of December 2001 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at Mt. Carmel Church.

"Come to me all you who are weary
and burdened and I will give you rest."
Matthew 11:28

In Loving Memory
on the **Third Death Anniversary** of our dearest

VIRGINIA ODULIO MEDALLA

who went home to join our Creator on December 15, 1998.

We, her loving husband **Edwin**; and children **Richard, Alfred and Adelle** request our relatives, friends and all those whose lives she may have touched, to pray for her eternal peace and happiness with our Lord.

Holy Masses will be celebrated for her intention.

DR. JESUS S. MANLAPAZ

UST Medicine Class 1956

Of Manila, and a Neurosurgeon in Connecticut, USA died in Bridgewater, CT
On December 3, 2001 at the age of 71.

His bereaved wife **Beverly Bugel**; sisters **Josefina M. Garcia, Corazon M. Acayan, Henrietta M. Enano, Aurora M. Coronel, Erlinda M. Ruiz, Elizabeth M. Soriano, Virginia M. Oledan** and **Consuelo M. Alzate**; brothers-in-law, nephews and nieces request their relatives, friends and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Interment was held December 10, 2001 at the Pine Grove Cemetery, Ansonia, CT USA.

"It's better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all."

On the day the Lord took back from us our beloved **Bidy**

MS. REMILY CAPILI

the sun grew a little dimmer, the star cast off a little of their sparkle,

and we, her brothers and sisters **TONY** (†) & **FELY, SABAS & LINDA, MING & LILY, DING** (†) & **LOLIT, NEL & ERMING** (†), **ENENG** (†) & **JOE** (†), **LEVY & DOMING, NE & MAR, ESTER**; nieces and nephews, grandchildren and great grandchildren lost the mirth of our laughter.

Thanks to Friends and Relatives whose prayers, words of comfort, flowers sent and mere presence made our loss bearable, our grief lighter, and our pain endurable.

Thank you for your kindness and thoughtfulness.

WE DESIGN OBITUARIES FOR FREE.

Aries B. Espinosa, Assistant Editor
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Leo Burnett takes top honors at Ad Congress

IN TERMS of sheer quality, Leo Burnett Manila emerged as outright winner at the recently concluded 17th Advertising Congress. In addition to winning a much-coveted platinum award, Burnett reaped 11 golds, six silvers and 33 bronzes.

LB Manila's magnificent winning streak highlighted the Ad Congress, the advertising industry's biennial get-together capped by Araw Awards, its most prestigious recognition-giving body.

The agency's Bengay TV campaign got a perfect score from all the judges to win the platinum, while also picking a gold, a silver and three bronzes in various categories.

Bengay snared the gold for Best Low Budget TV Production, the silver for Best Campaign and three bronzes for Best Direction and Best TV Single Entry.

The Bengay campaign consisted of three TV commercials – "Japanese", "Basketball", and "Traffic".

Of the three, "Japanese" drew the most awards, apparently for its effectiveness in driving home the messages in the simplest, yet most dramatic fashion in all of just 15 seconds.

Capitalizing on the world's familiarity with the Japanese culture, the TVC pictured an executive responding to the greeting of his Japanese visitors, forcing him to bow despite an aching hip, thus dramatizing the frustration behind muscle pains.

Next to Bengay was McDonald's, which was in the running for Advertiser of the Year, and eventually drew a total of 19 awards.

LB Manila's other award raker was Procter & Gamble, winning 10 awards for its Tide, Mr. Clean and Secret commercials.

Not far behind was Pacific Internet, whose radio campaign won six.

The awards earned by Cinderella's SYC, Drysdale, Standard Chartered and Leo Burnett itself completed the agency's large haul of 51 awards.

First Direct, Leo Burnett's direct marketing arm, also fared well in the competition, garnering six awards in the collateral, print and craftsmanship-best art direction categories for clients The Enterprise Center, CalEnergy, Heinz (Tomato Ketchup), Lexmedia and Similan.com.

"We reaped this harvest of Araw Awards for real clients, real brands – major brands at that, addressing real market issues and delivering real market success," said LB Manila managing director March Ventosa.

"The breadth of the awards cuts across eight clients and 10 brands and further across the agency. This shows how we continue to live and breathe our mission of building brand believers", Ventosa added.

Ranked among the Philippines' top ad agencies, LB Manila is part of transnational advertising network Leo Burnett Worldwide, whose global operations include 94 full-service advertising agencies and a variety of speciality marketing services. The company handles at least seven of the world's 25 most valuable global brands.

CONTRACT SIGNING

SMART AGREEMENT WITH HIDDEN VALLEY SPRINGS

Local and foreign tourists spending their vacation at the Hidden Valley Springs Resort in Laguna will now have a clear mobile signal as Smart Communications is in the process of installing a GSM facility here. Smart Communications Inc. recently signed a memorandum of agreement with Valley Resort Corp. for the free use of its resort property in Alaminos, Laguna. The agreement will facilitate the installation of a Smart extender GSM facility that will boost the 900mhz digital signal, in terms of coverage and quality, in the resort area. Signing the contract are (second from right, front row) Rodante T. Medina, network services division – project management and implementation department head, Smart Communications Inc. and (second from left, front row) Guillermo B. Roxas, president, Valley Resort Corp. Witnessing the event are (extreme left, front row) Cora Raquedan, head for finance-accounting control, Smart Communications Inc. and (extreme right, front row) Rafael J. Roxas, general manager, Valley Resort Corp. Also shown are (second row, from left) Roy Jeresano, manager, network services division-project management and implementation, Smart Communications Inc. Salvio Valenzuela, manager, network services division-project management and implementation, Ma. Eugenia R. Vallarta, comptroller, Valley Resort Corp., Peter Paul O. Simbol, supervisor, network services division – project management and implementation, and Ernie Deniega; site acquisition officer, Smart Communications Inc.

VASELINE CAROLING COMPETITION

Children's sweet rendition of beloved carols filled the air as Vaseline Amino Collagen Shampoo recently held the 'Feel The Glow of Christmas' Caroling Competition NCR Regional Finals at the UP Bahay ng Alumni in Diliman, Quezon City last Dec. 2. A total of 10 grade school choral groups from various qualifying areas in NCR presented their contest piece and own rendition of 'Feel the Glow of Christmas.' Garden of Life School with choirmaster Jose Fuster Jr. presented their own rendition of 'Christmas is a Time to Love' and own version of 'Feel the Glow of Christmas,' both in acapella, emerged as the winning choral group representing NCR in the grand finals. Each regional winner will compete in the grand finals to be held on GMA's Sunday noontime show SOP on Dec. 16. A representative of Garden of Life was awarded as the winning choral group thus representing NCR in the grand finals in SOP. Awarding the trophy are Edward Arandia, assistant brand manager, and Francis Aswin, brand manager of Vaseline Amino Collagen Shampoo. The Vaseline Amino Caroling competition was made possible in cooperation with GMA Network Inc. and RGMA Network Inc.

STANDOUT BEAUTY AT MISS ASIA PACIFIC 2001

A profusion of standout beauties from around the world made their way to the NBC Tent at Fort Bonifacio Global City last Nov. 17, to shine at the Miss Asia Pacific 2001 Quest. Contestants from all around the globe vied for the coveted crown of Miss Asia Pacific, yet one contestant's beauty stood our from the rest. Luciana Farfan, Miss Peru, captivated the audience with her charm, grace and loveliness. She bagged the prestigious Miss Lux Super Rich Standout Beauty Award because of her beautiful, shiny hair. Not only that, Luciana also caught the crowd's attention in a daring, green sequinned gown, which won her the Best in Evening Gown title. As the evening progressed, there was little doubt left as to who would win the grand title. Miss Peru, Luciana Farfan, proved that she was the standout beauty of the night and triumphed as Miss Asia Pacific 2001. Farfan is shown here with Colette Reyes, brand manager of Lux Super Rich Shampoo.

KOLIN IS ISO 9002 CERTIFIED

Kolin Home Appliances, maker of the no-rust, no-drip air-conditioner, is now ISO 9002 certified. Certification International Philippines (CIP) awarded Kolin Philippines International Inc. with an ISO 9002 certificate last Nov. 9 at the Manila Midtown Hotel. Among the several guests, the event was well-attended by friends from the press, Kolin's dealers and Randy Ochoa, Kolin product endorser and image model. Now, being ISO 9002 certified, Kolin will continue to produce safe, durable, quality home appliances and deliver total customer satisfaction through prompt and reliable after-sales-service, while fostering a team approach that constantly improves work systems and processes. Shown are Tom Y. Tseng, (Kolin president and CEO) and Renato Navarette (CIP managing director). For more details regarding Kolin Home Appliances, visit the Kolin Showroom, ground floor, Kolin Building, Edsa corner Magallanes Avenue, Makati City, with telephone numbers (02) 852-1531 up to 37 or any dealers nationwide.

Linea Italia offers half price on all items

THE LINEA Italia Group and Marconi Fashion Group recently announced that all their Italian merchandise would be available at half their prices starting Dec. 7 as part of their "Price War" campaign.

All clothes, shoes, bags and accessories, including previously discounted items, are included in the promotion. These include selections from Versace, Gianfranco Ferre, Dolce & Gabbana, Stefanel, Mariella Burani, Philosophy di Alberta Ferreti, Max Mara, Sportmax, Pietrogrande, Trussardi, Messori, Gai Mattiolo, Pinko, Guiducci, Henry Cottons, Pal Zileri, Navajos, Marco Gabbriellini, and many others.

Participating stores include Linea Italia 6750, Versace Jeans Couture (Greenbelt), Prima Linea (Greenbelt, SM Megamall, Ayala Center Cebu), Linea Italia (SM Megamall, Ayala Center Cebu) Linea Uomo (SM Megamall, SM Cebu and Park Square I), Uomo Tu (Greenbelt, Ayala Center Cebu), Viva (SM Megamall, SM Cebu), Capolinea (Greenbelt, SM Cebu) and Corso Marconi at Marconi corner Morse Streets, Makati City (main branch), Festival Supermall Alabang, Robinsons Galleria, SM Manila, Cebu and the new Corso Marconi Bacolod.

Body Naturals for the Filipina

BODY Naturals Philippines Inc. (BNPI) an affiliate of Body Naturals Intimate Fashions New York, recently unveiled its complete line of comfortable, stylish and affordable undergarments specifically designed to meet the demanding lifestyles of today's Filipina. Led by BNPI president Rafael Tinio, Body Natural's new collection was presented to the company's business partners, network dealers from all over the country, and the press, through a fast-paced, eye-catching fashion show held at the Westin Philippine Plaza.

The occasion also paved the way for the introduction of the team behind Body Naturals entry into the Philippines. Gelmart Industries Inc. based in New York, offers logistic and product development support, while Gelmart Industries Philipines Inc. (GIPI) functions as the local manufacturing arm and Body Naturals Philippines Inc. handles the local market distribution and sales. Shown are (from left) GIPI manager Alex Labang, Sagalit Djemal, BNPI president Rafael Tinio, GIP general manager Sinai Djemal and lawyer Bob Atardi.

The quest for superior quality undergarments at the right price has ended with the recent launch of Body Naturals' lingerie collection, for the Filipina who deserves to feel beautiful inside and out.

BBFI at 10

THE BATO Balani Foundation Inc (BBFI) is celebrating its 10th year on Saturday, Dec. 15, at Elks Club in Makati City. It will be an avenue to gather together BBFI's partners, speakers, donors, and sponsors and to honor and recognize their participation in the Foundation's mission in education. BBFI has the franchise and is the acknowledged leader in teacher training and book donation. It is an active member of the League of Corporate Foundations, Associations of Foundations, and the Makati NGO Network. As a participation in promoting corporate volunteerism, BBFI has actively involved several employees and officers. In 2001, BBFI clocked 2,281 volunteer hours—equivalent to about 285 working days per volunteer.

Get-Away promo at Punta Baluarte

TREAT your family early or plan ahead for this holiday season for an overnight (or more days) at Punta Baluarte, where you can enjoy the breeze and the view to your heart's delight. If you desire for an overnight or extended days of serene nature tripping, avail yourself of Punta Baluarte's Get-Away Advantage promo. At a reasonable rate of P1,500 net for two persons on weekday and P2,750 net for two persons on weekends, guests can avail of overnight accommodation with free breakfast for two. Complimentary use of freshwater and saltwater swimming pools, one-hour use of tennis court or horseback riding and game room are included. Promo ends Dec. 20. Reservations can be made at Punta Baluarte Makati office at the 5th floor of Enzo Building, telephone numbers 899-4546 and 899-4550.

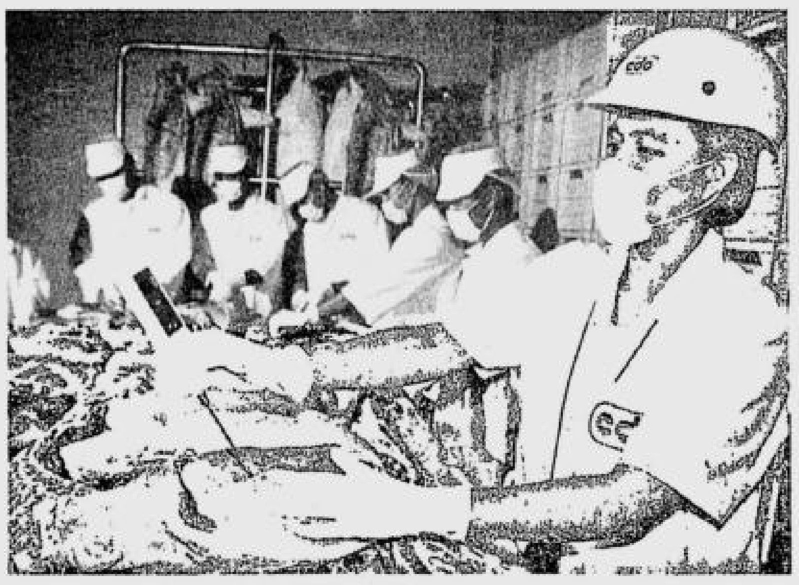
Isuzu extends 0 interest on Crosswind

IN TIME for the holiday season, Isuzu gives buyers more reason to have a merry Christmas by extending its value-for-money deals until Dec. 20. Get zero percent monthly interest with the Crosswind XTO A/T for a 50-percent down payment, or an initial cash outlay of P386,500 on 12 or 18-month installment term. Also for the XTO M/T is a zero-interest plan for a 50-percent down payment of P366,500, on a 12-month paying term. Likewise, buyers are given a low down payment option. Get the Crosswind XTO A/T at a low 20-percent down payment of P106,660. Down payment for an XTO M/T. on the other hand, is pegged at P108,660. Big discounts also await all cash buyers. A whopping P48,000 price off is tagged with the Crosswind XTO A/T. At the same time, the XTO M/T is pegged at P38,000 cash discount.

WORLDBEX SERVICES INTERNATIONAL
World bazaar festival

BARBIE JOINS WORLD BAZAAR FESTIVAL

Richwell Trading Corp., distributor of Barbie dolls in the Philippines, has signed up with the World Bazaar Festival – the country's biggest international Christmas shopping exposition slated Dec. 19 to 25 at the World Trade Center in Pasay City. Organized by Worldbex Services International (WSI), the most awaited trade fair is a gathering of international traders and manufacturers who will sell their wares at drop-down prices for seven straight days in a run-up to Christmas day. One of the attractions during the bazaar will be the Barbie fashion show. Signing the memorandum of agreement are Worldbex Services International founding chair Joseph Ang and May Yao, Richwell Trading Corp. marketing manager (second and third from left). With them are WSI director Tintin Liboro (left) and WSI vice president Eduardo Diamonon (right).



HAMMING IT UP WITH CDO

Production crew at CDO, a multi-awarded meat processing firm, intensify operations to build up specialty ham inventory in anticipation of a big demand during the holidays. Despite the economic crisis, meat processors are bullish on Christmas hams sales this year because Filipino associate Yuletide with merry making and feasting.

HOTEL OWNERS MEET AT HYATT REGENCY MANILA

The Philippine Hotel Owners Association held a luncheon meeting to discuss industry concerns at the Balitaw Room of Hyatt Regency Manila. Photo shows (seated, from left) Belena Mariano, the association's executive secretary; Norma Asores, vice president, Holiday Inn; Elizabeth Ann Chan, executive vice president, Hyatt Regency Manila and Nicole Morris, executive vice president, Grand Boulevard Hotel; (standing) Chiyuki Fujimoto, general manager, Dusit Hotel Nikko, Jhonson Go, president, Manila Midtown Hotels and Land Corp.; Henry Lieuson, executive vice president, Pan Pacific Manila; Oscar Salvacion, president, Westin Philippine Plaza; Patricio Lim, board chair, The Peninsula Manila; Lamberto Gopez, vice president, Manila Midtown Hotels and Land Corp.; Kazuhiro Tsubouchi, senior vice president, Manila Hotel; Mazaru Ishibashi, executive vice president, Manila Diamond and David E.T. Lim, president, The Peninsula Manila.

SCIENCE /HEALTH

CESAR D. MANGAWANG, Editor ■ STELLA O. GONZALES, Assistant Editor

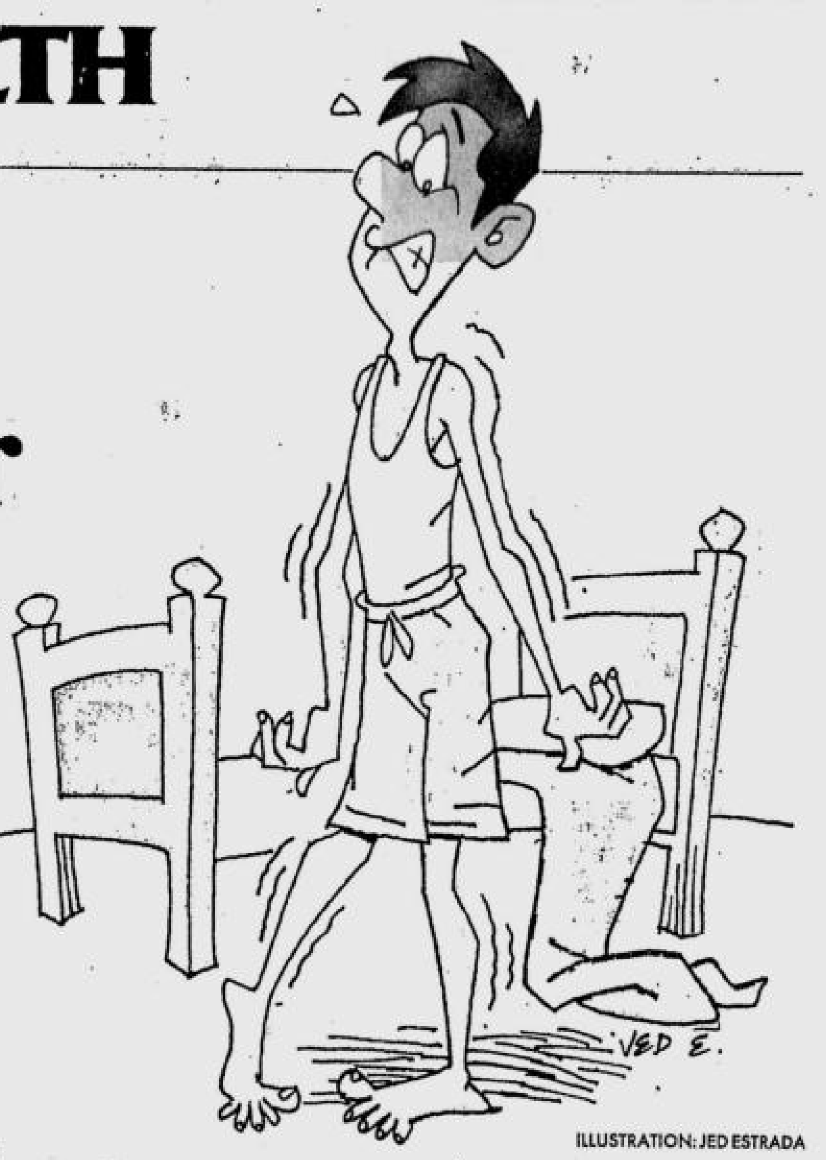


ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

'LUBAG'

Living with a physically, socially disabling disorder

BY GERRY T. PAGHARION
PDI Visayas Bureau

ROXAS CITY—When Rene (not his real name) woke up one morning in February 1998, he could hardly move. There was pain all over his body. His muscles were hardening. He tried to walk but he had difficulty lifting his legs.

He was gripped in fear.

He tried to wish away the thought that he was exhibiting symptoms of a rare movement disorder, called *lubag* in the local dialect, which had afflicted his older sister. But he knew that it was hopeless. He knew that he had been struck with *lubag*.

And then he cried.

Rene was only 38 years old and had a family to take care of—a wife, two daughters and a son. But the ailment had forced him to stop working.

Endemic in Capiz

Lubag, or X-linked dystonia-parkinsonism, is a genetic disorder that was found to be endemic in Panay Island, particularly in Capiz.

Panay Island accounts for nearly half of the about 500 X-linked dystonia-parkinsonism cases worldwide, according to Dr. Lilian Lee of the Philippine Children Medical Center. Capiz accounts for 68 percent of X-linked dystonia-parkinsonism cases in the Philippines.

A patient afflicted with the disorder appears to be constantly writhing in pain. In severe cases, the tongue dangles out of the mouth and the person drools uncontrollably. Because of this, *lubag* sufferers have often been mistaken as *aswangs* (vampires).

Lee lashed out at what she called an irresponsible report published by a Manila-based tabloid which insinuated that persons afflicted with the disorder were "*aswangs*."

Lee said *lubag* patients needed compassion and understanding, not contempt or ridicule.

Lee has been vigorously pursuing research about the movement disorder since it was discovered in the 1960s in Panay Island by the late Dr. George Viterbo, a Capiceño.

No known cure

Lubag is characterized by the involuntary twisting of the muscles in the neck, arms, torso and legs. In some cases, the disorder affects the entire body of the person.

But the person's intellectual capacity and sensory functions remain normal.

Lubag is a Hiligaynon word that means "to twist." It is sometimes also called "*wa'eg*" when there are sustained twisting postures and "*sud-sud*" (denoting the sound of sandals slapping the pavement) when there is a shuffling gait.

There is yet no known cure for the disorder. Sufferers can only get temporary relief—one way is through a treatment called "muscle afferent block."

Studies show that X-linked dystonia-parkinsonism begins with symptoms of Parkinson's disease (shaking and slow movement), then progresses to uncontrolled twisting of the limbs and finally ends at old age with the same symptoms that it started with.

The symptoms usually start to appear at age 35, but it has been reported even at 14 years.

Of the around 300 persons in Capiz afflicted with *lubag*, only four are females.

X chromosome

According to the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation, the disorder has been traced to chromosome Xq13 (thus the name "X-linked"). The gene mutation responsible for the disorder was introduced by a common ancestor into an ethnic group in Panay hundreds of years ago.

Research showed that a female possessing the mutated gene does not manifest the symptoms but will pass on the defective gene to 25 percent of her children. Her sons will manifest the symptoms; her daughters will carry the defective gene.

If the father has the disorder, his sons will not manifest the symptoms and will not possess the defective gene. His daughters, however, will become carriers who can pass on the disorder to their own offspring.

The situation is different if both parents are suffering from the disorder. If, say, the couple has two sons and two daughters, one son and one daughter will manifest the symptoms. The other son will be normal; the other daughter will be a carrier of the defective gene.

Living with the stigma

More than the pain and the discomfort, it is the stigma that affects most *lubag* patients. They usually fall into depression upon learning that they have the disorder.

Rene said he knew of at least two *lubag* patients who committed suicide because of the trauma, the pain and the humiliation they had to endure.

He said he was almost driven to suicide, but the love and support of his wife and children made him strong and he learned to accept his fate.

"They have been so good to me despite my helpless situation," he said of his family.

His son, who earns a modest salary as a sales representative, shoulders the family's expenses, including the cost of Rene's medication.

Rene said he often feels embarrassed for not being able to perform his role as head of the family. Forced by circumstances to drop his role as the breadwinner, Rene had to rely for a while upon the help of friends and relatives for his family's subsistence and his medication.

He also had to sell some of the family property so he could go to Manila to see medical experts in the hope of finding a cure for his ailment.

A Manila-based doctor he had consulted in Manila prescribed medicines like Akineton and Artane, which cost P11 and P22 each.

He used to take these medicines once a day but he increased his daily dosage to three when his condition worsened. Rene said he gets temporary relief once he takes the medicines.

Hiding from other people

Government assistance is actually available but most *lubag* patients refuse to avail of it because they do not want to be seen in public.

The city health office in Roxas City set up in 1999 a dystonia unit where persons with the disorder could seek treatment every Tuesday. But very few bothered to go there, preferring instead to confine themselves inside their homes, away from the prying eyes of other Capiz residents.

Rene admitted he has not gone to the dystonia unit because he did not want to be seen in public in such a condition.

The treatment given by the clinic relieves the patient from the constant twisting, but only temporarily—from three to six months. It is also expensive: one vial of the drug costs P16,000.

The local dystonia unit also provides counseling, especially to teenaged couples where the female is the carrier of the defective gene. Couples are usually advised to limit the number of their children because the fewer they have, the less possibility there is that the disorder will be passed on to their offspring.

The city health office also has physical therapists who treat dystonia patients on a weekly basis.

This year, the city government through Mayor Antonio del Rosario released P100,000 to the local dystonia unit and the provincial government under Gov. Vicente Bermejo released P30,000.

Breakthrough?

There is also continuing research on how to combat the disorder.

At the St. Luke's Movement Disorder Center that was set up in 1999, doctors have been exploring methods to control the effects of X-linked dystonia-parkinsonism.

Lee, on the other hand, said she has achieved a "breakthrough" in dystonia research with the discovery of a more effective and cheaper medicine. But she refused to elaborate, saying the medicine has yet to be presented before an international forum of doctors and scientists.

For his part, Rene is no longer concerned about what the future has in store for him.

What scares him now is the fate of his children. Will they suffer the same fate that had befallen him?

The case of the swelling legs

BY RAFAEL R. CASTILLO, MD

MEDICAL FILES

DR. Florimond Garcia, a vascular surgeon in the country famous for saving a lot of previously diagnosed hopeless legs with poor circulation, patiently evaluated Michelle D., a 44-year-old mother of three. She was referred to him for "heavy legs" noted for about a year already. This was later accompanied by swelling of the legs and the appearance of a brown discoloration of the skin in her ankles, which later sustained a superficial ulcer or wound.

At first, she attributed this condition to fatigue since she was spending at least 12 hours cooking and serving in the small eatery that her family owned. She tried self-medication with Amoxicillin but the leg ulcer became bigger and the swelling worsened. Her family physician also tried to treat her without much success. She was then referred to Dr. Garcia, the department chief of cardiovascular and peripheral vascular surgery at the St. Luke's Heart Institute.

Diagnosis

On examination, Dr. Garcia noted bluish, tortuous dilated but nonpainful superficial veins on both of Michelle's legs. There were no signs of inflammation or infection. However, there was swelling or *manas* in both her forelegs. It was a clear-cut case of chronic venous insufficiency or CVI, said the famous surgeon.

Michelle became visibly distressed after hearing of her problem. As an ordinary person exposed only to her domestic chores, it was something she had never heard of and the uncertainty of what the disease was worried her. To ease her worry, Dr. Garcia patiently explained to her the problem of CVI.

CVI is a disease of the veins due to the destruction of the valves, which are small structures in the veins preventing backflow of blood. The venous valve incompetence or insufficiency then causes pooling of the blood in the legs and ankles. Studies show that CVI occurs more frequently in females than males and its incidence rises substantially with age. Genetics also play an important role in the occurrence of CVI. History of deep vein thrombosis, wherein blood clots clog up the veins, renders the venous valves incompetent or defective, causing backflow and increased pressure inside the veins.

Prolonged standing

However, in Michelle's case, the nature of her work was the most likely culprit for her condition. Vocations that involve standing for long periods predispose individuals to increased venous pressure in the dependent lower extremities. Since Michelle is usually up and standing continuously for 12 hours every day doing her cooking and other chores in her eatery, her leg veins have to endure the increase in pressure. Based on clinical studies, smoking also causes a higher incidence of CVI, especially in men.

The chief clinical manifestations or symptoms of CVI are dilated veins, leg pain, edema and skin changes. The frequency is related to the severity of the disease. Heaviness and swelling may develop after prolonged standing or sitting. Edema, or the accumulation of an excessive amount of watery fluid in cells, tissues, or body cavities, may be the first indication of early CVI.

Patients suffering from CVI, like Michelle, usually note that the swelling is mild and limited to the area just above the shoe line around the ankle. The edema usually resolves with bed rest, particularly if the legs are elevated during sleep. As swelling increases, the skin over the ankles may show red spots or brownish yellow tinge. The skin may start to feel leathery and may start to itch. If edema is not controlled, blood pools in the ankles and fluid leaks into the surrounding tissues. The tissues eventually break down and an ulcer or superficial wound forms.

However, not all patients with CVI may experience pain. Only a small percentage of patients with CVI, as in the case of Michelle, experience limb heaviness or ache most commonly located at the calf area after prolonged standing. Aside from the pain, skin changes can also be observed in CVI patients. The brown discoloration on the skin is due to hemosiderin deposits, or the yellow-brown insoluble protein found especially in the liver.

Frequently eczematous skin lesions are noted and these are most commonly the reason for referral to a skin specialist. In general, this manifestation is a sign of longstanding venous insufficiency.

Treatment

With this information, Michelle had a clearer idea on what CVI was all about. However, she was more concerned with the next step after diagnosis, which is the treatment. What would it take to recover from this disease?

Dr. Garcia advised her to elevate her legs to relieve her symptoms and to wear tight compression stockings. She was also prescribed diosmin-hesperidin (Daflon) 500 mg tablet twice daily. This drug protects the blood vessels and improves the tone of the veins, relieving venous insufficiency.

Dr. Garcia further explained that lying down with elevation of the limb, relieves limb heaviness within a short period. Elevation helps return blood to the heart and reduces fluid buildup in the legs. This helps keep the increased blood flow from pooling in the legs. Active leg muscles squeeze blood up the veins toward the heart.

"How about my small eatery? Can I still continue working and cooking?" The worry was quite evident in her tone.

"Yes, you certainly can, provided you follow all the instructions I gave you," reassured Dr. Garcia.

However, Dr. Garcia was quick to add that Michelle should avoid prolonged sitting and standing. She should keep her blood moving by performing foot exercises at least every half-hour. To improve overall circulation, Michelle was advised to spend part of every day swimming or walking. Increasing blood flow back to the heart reduces the risk of developing ulcers. If standing and sitting in one place was unavoidable, wiggling the toes or shifting body position would help keep the blood circulating properly.

There is also the option of wearing compression stockings.

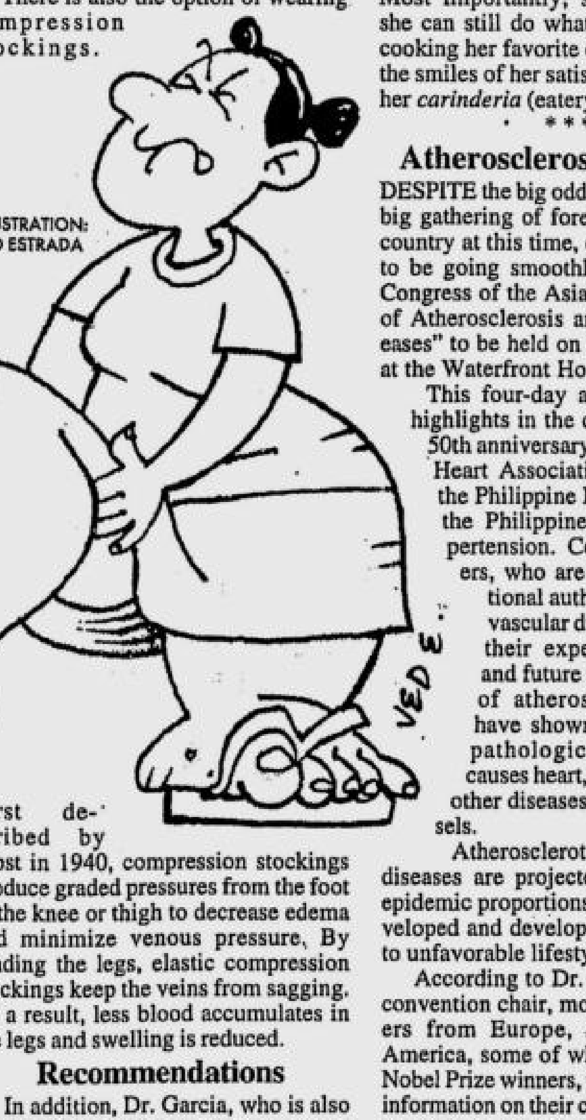


ILLUSTRATION: JED ESTRADA

First described by Jobst in 1940, compression stockings produce graded pressures from the foot to the knee or thigh to decrease edema and minimize venous pressure. By binding the legs, elastic compression stockings keep the veins from sagging. As a result, less blood accumulates in the legs and swelling is reduced.

Recommendations

In addition, Dr. Garcia, who is also the president of the Venous Forum of the Philippines, gives the following recommendations to help Michelle and other CVI sufferers prevent infection and enhance healing of leg ulcers due to CVI:

- Visit your doctor. Ulcers often need frequent medical care. Special dressing may be applied to absorb drainage, while keeping the ulcer surface moist. If necessary, you may be given antibiotics to fight infection.
- Elevate your legs often. Damaged tissue needs oxygen-rich blood to heal. But this blood can't reach the ulcer until nearby swelling is reduced. Elevation is the best way to reduce leg swelling.
- Never shower in the morning. Heat dilates the vein. Shower only in the evening before bedtime. Similarly, never sit in front of a stove or source of heat like a fireplace.
- Wear laced up shoes, never sandals as these will allow fluid to accumulate in your feet.
- Walk a lot, exercise to activate the muscle pump, but have compression on your legs at all times. During prolonged travel, wear compression stockings and every hour or so, get up and walk around.

Michelle faithfully heeded the advice and suggestions of Dr. Garcia. Her leg ulcer has healed. The swelling still comes on and off but definitely much less. Her legs don't feel heavy anymore. Most importantly, she's happy that she can still do what she loves most: cooking her favorite dishes and seeing the smiles of her satisfied customers in her *carinderia* (eatery).

* * *

Atherosclerosis congress

DESPITE the big odds for conducting a big gathering of foreign guests in the country at this time, everything seems to be going smoothly for the "Third Congress of the Asian Pacific Society of Atherosclerosis and Vascular Diseases" to be held on Feb. 17-20, 2002 at the Waterfront Hotel in Cebu City.

This four-day affair, one of the highlights in the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Philippine Heart Association, is hosted by the Philippine Lipid Society and the Philippine Society of Hypertension. Convention speakers, who are eminent international authorities on cardiovascular diseases, will share their expertise on current and future issues in the field of atherosclerosis, which have shown to be the basic pathological process that causes heart, brain, kidney and other diseases of the blood vessels.

Atherosclerotic cardiovascular diseases are projected to increase to epidemic proportions both in underdeveloped and developing countries due to unfavorable lifestyle practices.

According to Dr. Rody Sy, overall convention chair, more than 50 speakers from Europe, Asia and North America, some of whom are potential Nobel Prize winners, will give firsthand information on their clinical studies and valuable insights on various aspects of atherosclerosis. Its relation to other diseases such as diabetes, hyperlidemia and high blood pressure will also be discussed.

The congress will feature eight plenary sessions, 15 simultaneous symposiums discussing at least 60 topics, and 18 industry-sponsored satellite lectures. Among the topics to be discussed are Frontiers in Atherosclerosis, Diabetes and Cardiovascular Diseases, Genetic Markers, Role of Infection and Inflammation, Vitamins and Supplements in the Prevention of Atherosclerosis, Updates on Cardiovascular Care, Atherosclerosis in Women and Other Special Population and Management of the Various Risk Factors.

THE CASE/p.B14

A greeting and a pun

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

NOTHING pleases me more when a reader takes the time to say hello. Below is a welcome message from an old acquaintance, B. Al. Hernandez [balhri@edsamail. com.ph]:

Among all the items you have written, I like "E-mail Lessons" best (May 19, 2001). We had you as our guest speaker more than 10 years ago in the Rotaract Club of Binondo that meets on the second and fourth Saturday of every month. Subsequently, I proposed to you that you put up a Rotaract Club in Ateneo in which you will be the charter president. Of course, you declined.

When we first met, I told you that your father was one of my friends. He used to hold office at a building in Makati. I have since lost track of him. By the way, please continue sharing us the information, which you receive through the Internet from students, colleagues and friends.

It is such a nice surprise to receive missives from friends of long ago. I hope Rotaract is still going strong. My father is now retired, and sends his best regards. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the tips, factoids, anecdotes, jokes, and so on e-mailed to me daily by readers and colleagues. This column would not exist without your support.

* * *

From Kerwin Khu [khu@pacific.net.ph]:

Here is a useful math site. http://go.to/mathpage.

Thanks for the tip. The site contains surprises for the mathematically inclined reader.

* * *

Now for a nice dose of humor. The pun at the conclusion of this joke is so good that I cannot resist sharing this with you. Joel Patrick Caballa (joelcaballa@hotmail.com), a former colleague in the Ateneo Math Department, passed this on.

There once was a tribe of native Americans out west who had a very old chief. In this tribe, chief-hood was inherited, passed from father to son. But this chief had three sons. Making a decision about who would be the heir would be difficult. So the chief told his sons, "You will marry, and I will judge your choice and your first-born, and then I will decide."

The first son married a squaw he'd known from childhood. He felt she was the best choice because she had wide hips and an ample frame to keep her healthy in dire times. On their wedding day, he gave her a bear hide for their wedding bed, from a bear he had killed himself.

The second son married a widowed squaw who had two sons from a previous husband. He thought she was the best choice because she had proved she could conceive and bear healthy children. On their wedding day, he gave her an antelope hide for their bed from an antelope he had killed himself.

The third son married an exotic princess from another tribe. Nobody knew anything about her, except that she was young and beautiful. Nobody knew why the third son felt she was the best choice. In keeping with tradition, he too on their wedding day gave her a hide from the bed—the hide of a hippopotamus he had killed himself.

Nine months later, the first (bear-hide) squaw and the second (antelope-hide) squaw bore their husbands a son. But the third one (hippopotamus-hide squaw) bore her husband twin boys. The old chief was happy and immediately named the third son to be his successor. And the tribe approved his choice, because everybody knows that the sons of the squaw of the hippopotamus are equal to the sons of the squaw of the other two hides.

PMA ties up with Safeguard for disease prevention drive

THE PHILIPPINE Medical Association, the country's foremost group of medical doctors, and Procter & Gamble (P&G), a leading manufacturer of consumer products such as Safeguard, have recently announced their partnership in promoting the prevention of hygiene-related diseases.

The project primarily involves educating the public on easy ways of keeping healthy and avoiding sickness, according to PMA president Dr. Gil C. Fernandez.

"Safeguard has passed the standards of our medical association, especially in removing skin germs that can cause illnesses and infections," Fernandez said.

Frequent hand washing, particularly before eating and after going to the bathroom, is recognized as the simplest yet most effective way to prevent diarrhea and other hygiene-related diseases.

The fourth leading cause of infant mortality, diarrhea is also the country's leading illness, with 908,454 cases reported in 1999, PMA records show.

"We are honored that the PMA has chosen Safeguard as a partner in this public service project," said P&G external relations senior manager Chit Itchon.

MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGH

Intensive insulin therapy cuts ICU death rate by 42%

BY TESSA R. SALAZAR

A TREATMENT that would bring about reduced deaths and complications in intensive care units.

This was the conclusion of Belgian proponents of a clinical study that focused on patients' treatment in intensive care units.

'Paradigm shift'

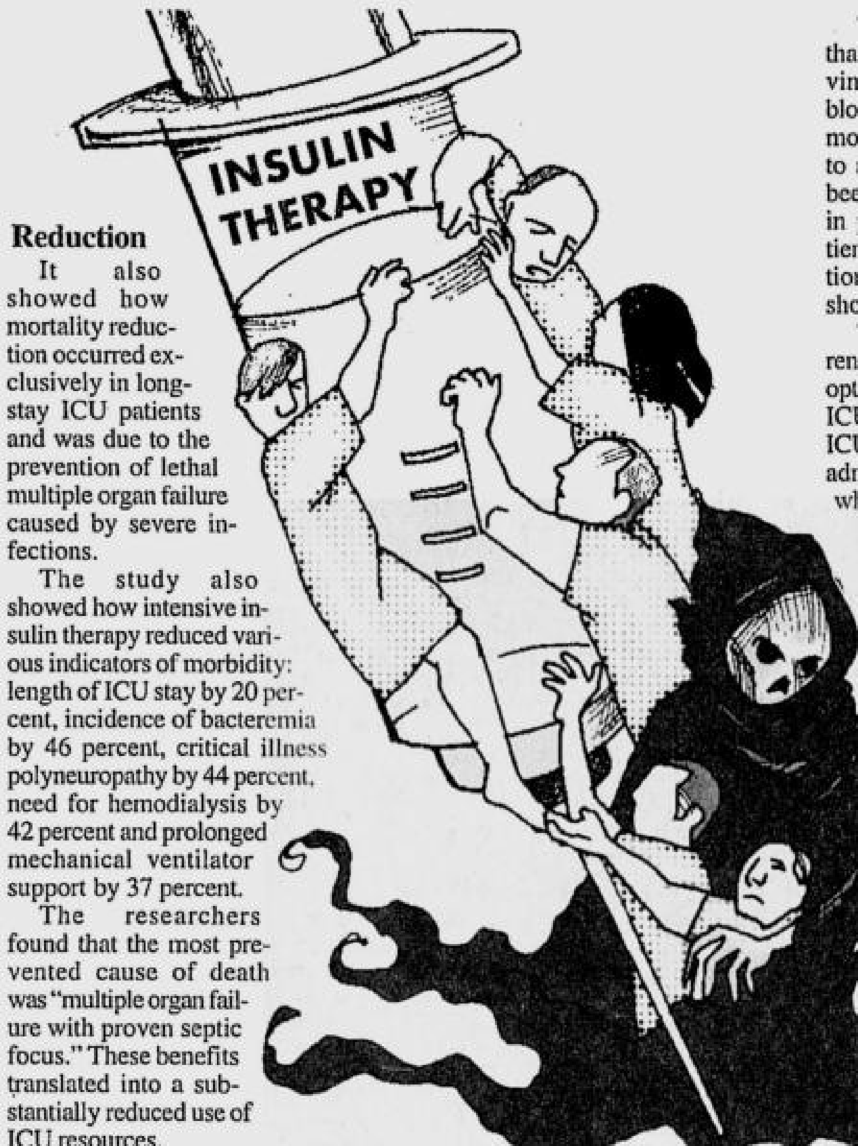
Described by a Filipino cardiologist in a press conference in Manila as a "paradigm shift" in the field of ICU medicine, the findings of researchers involved 1,548 critically ill adult patients admitted to the ICU, many of whom were on mechanical ventilators.

The study showed how the tight control of blood glucose levels with intensive insulin treatment on ICU patients reduced mortality by 42 percent, compared to the standard insulin therapy. This translated to 63 deaths in the standard therapy group compared to 35 in the intensive therapy group. Intensive therapy also reduced hospital mortality by 34 percent.

The study was announced in the Philippines during a recent press conference presented by Novo Nordisk with cardiologists from the St. Luke's Medical Center in attendance.

The patients received a Novo Nordisk Actrapid HM (Novolin in the United States), a regular, human insulin injection therapy (recombinant DNA origin). This is either intensive, to maintain their blood glucose in the normal range at 80 to 110 mg/dL, or the standard treatment to maintain blood glucose at 180 to 216 mg/dL.

The study also showed patients in the standard and the intensive treatment were comparable for factors that could affect clinical outcomes including age, gender, body mass index, type and severity of illness, history of diabetes and malignancy.



Reduction

It also showed how mortality reduction occurred exclusively in long-stay ICU patients and was due to the prevention of lethal multiple organ failure caused by severe infections.

The study also showed how intensive insulin therapy reduced various indicators of morbidity: length of ICU stay by 20 percent, incidence of bacteremia by 46 percent, critical illness polyneuropathy by 44 percent, need for hemodialysis by 42 percent and prolonged mechanical ventilator support by 37 percent.

The researchers found that the most prevented cause of death was "multiple organ failure with proven septic focus." These benefits translated into a substantially reduced use of ICU resources.

"The study basically showed how we could decrease complications among ICU patients by normalizing sugar from 80 to 100 (mg/dL) and doing it six times a day. The traditional way was giving insulin only if the sugar shoots up to the level being maintained which is 180 to 200 (mg/dL)," said Dr. Nestor Santiago, director of the coronary care unit at the St. Luke's Medical Center Heart Institute.

Significant study

Dr. Editha Arceo Dalisay, a Novo Nordisk presenter specializing in diabetes care, also said that this study is significant also from "a purely scientific point of view" because it demonstrates that "hyperglycemia in ICU patients is neither adaptive nor beneficial and should be treated with intensive insulin therapy."

"Before, we were taught that one can lower a patient's sugar level only when it reaches 200 or higher, but now the sugar level—even in nondiabetic patients—should be lowered," said Santiago.

The medical experts also revealed during the press conference that it has long been known in the field that critically ill patients exhibit high levels of blood glucose (hyperglycemia) and insulin resistance.

The proponents of the study said that a number of studies have convincingly linked chronically high blood glucose levels to morbidity and mortality in diabetes. They are quick to add, however, that experts have been unsure whether hyperglycemia in previously nondiabetic ICU patients was part of a beneficial adaptation to stress or a disturbance that should be more strictly controlled.

The proponents also said that currently there is "no consensus on the optimal level of glycemic control in ICU patients." Traditionally, most ICUs in the United States and Europe administered insulin therapy only when blood glucose levels exceeded 12 mmol/L or 216 mg/dl, which is about twice the normal level. The statement further added that the researchers wanted to test whether maintaining blood glucose levels closer to normal would benefit ICU patients.

Reproducible

The Filipino doctors present at the media briefing said that small-scale studies on lowering sugar level during critical periods have been done before, but this particular study was the first major study done.

The St. Luke's Medical Center, particularly the Heart Institute's Coronary Care Unit, is willing to conduct its own trial.

Dr. Adelaida Iboleon Dy, assistant director of the Heart Institute's Coronary Care Unit at the St. Luke's Medical Center, said the experiment could possibly be duplicated in the local setting.

"Many studies are really foreign-adapted because these were financed by large foreign companies. This study is something that is reproducible. We can do it among ourselves. The population is selective. These are the critically ill patients in the ICU."

"The study immediately gave us an idea that it would be helpful for our patients," she added.

Watching out for the food you eat

BY CHARLES E. BUBAN

TIRED of hearing the advice of doctors and health experts very often? Well, we shouldn't be especially this Yuletide season when we tend to throw all cautions to the wind and wittingly feast on just about any food served to us.

Moderation is good advice, as overeating and overdrinking are among the reasons the Christmas season creates more health problems than any other time of year, according Dr. Adolfo Bellosillo, president of the Foundation for Lay Education on Heart Diseases.

One of the most important things to watch out during these times is your cholesterol level. "Cholesterol can be both good and bad, so it's important to learn what cholesterol is, how it affects your health and how to manage the cholesterol levels in your blood," advises Bellosillo.

Cholesterol is a soft, waxy substance found among the lipids (fats) in the bloodstream and in all your body's cells. It is normal to have cholesterol. It's an important part of a healthy body because it's used to form cell membranes, some hormones and other needed tissues.

Bellosillo informs that there are two kinds of cholesterol that you need to be concerned with. Low-density lipoprotein, or LDL, is known as the "bad" cholesterol since too much of this can clog the arteries to your heart and increase your risk of heart attack. High-density lipoprotein, or HDL, on the other hand, is known as the "good" cholesterol. Our body makes HDL cholesterol and a number of studies suggest that high levels of HDL cholesterol reduce the risk of a heart attack.

"Understanding the facts on cholesterol will help you take better care of your heart and live a healthier life, reducing your risk for heart attack and stroke. Get a cholesterol screening, eat foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol, maintain a healthy weight, exercise regularly and follow all your doctor's recommendations," suggests Bellosillo.

Food choice

Whatever your blood cholesterol level, you can make changes to help lower it or keep it low and reduce your risk for heart disease during this holiday season (and perhaps, for the rest of the coming year). These are some of the guidelines for healthy living for the whole family:

- **Choose foods low in cholesterol**—Choose foods low in dietary cholesterol. Dietary cholesterol is found only in foods that come from animals and watch out for organ meats like liver, kidneys and egg yolks since they are low in saturated fat but high in cholesterol. Limit high fat processed meats like bacon, bologna, salami, hotdogs and sausage.
- **Choose foods low in saturated fat**—Saturated fat raises your blood cholesterol level more than anything else you eat so you need to choose foods lower in saturated fat. Since all foods contain fats that are made up of a mixture of saturated and unsaturated fats, a safe pick would be fruits, vegetables and whole grains (like oats)—foods that are naturally low in total fat and high in starch and fiber.
- **Choose foods low in total fat**—Fat, whether from plant or animal sources, is a rich source of calories containing more than twice the number of calories of an equal amount of carbohydrate or protein. Fats contain both saturated and unsaturated (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated) fatty acids. Saturated fat raises blood cholesterol more than the unsaturated. When cooking, use olive or canola oils that are particularly high in monounsaturated fats. Most other vegetable oils, nuts and high-fat fish are good sources of polyunsaturated fats.
- **Choose foods high in starch and fiber**—Foods high in starch and fiber are excellent substitutes for foods high in saturated fat. Foods such as breads, cereals, pasta, grains, fruits and vegetables are low in saturated fat and cholesterol. They are also lower in calories than foods that are high in fat. But limit fatty toppings and spreads like butter and sauces made with cream and whole milk dairy products. Foods high in starch and fiber are also good sources of vitamins and minerals.

Gradual change

You don't have to cut out all high saturated fat, high cholesterol foods at once. Bellosillo suggests that by making the changes slowly, you are more likely to stick with your new eating plan.

"Just substitute one or two low saturated fat or low cholesterol foods each day, and soon you will reach your goal of heart-healthy eating for you and your family," he says.

Also eating a variety of foods each day will help you get the nutrients you need. Experts agree the key to healthy eating is the time-tested advice of balance, variety and moderation. This means eating a wide variety of foods without getting too many calories or too much of any one nutrient.

ASK THE DENTIST

PAUL R. DE CASTRO, DMD

Bad breath

MY sister says I have bad breath because I sleep with my mouth open. She's teasing me that I don't have a girlfriend because my breath smells. I don't think I have bad breath. Can you enlighten me on this?

Leo D.

If you sleep with your mouth open then you are a mouth breather while you are sleeping. Are you also a mouth breather during your waking hours? Mouth breathers end up with dry mouth and this could give you bad breath. A dry mouth has less saliva and saliva is needed to wash away particles that may cause bad odor.

Some people have dry mouth from medications or from salivary problems. They can use sugarless candy to increase salivary flow or they can increase their fluid intake. I suggest they carry around a water bottle and constantly drink from it.

Sometimes we cannot smell our own breath because our smell receptors are not as sensitive as we want them to be. If you catch yourself with your mouth open then simply close it

* * *

Dr. De Castro, a UP College of Dentistry graduate, is a cosmetic and general dentist licensed in the Philippines and the United States. Questions are welcome at dentalqs@yahoo.com.

Benguet town to institutionalize safe motherhood project of DoH

THE MUNICIPAL government of La Trinidad in Benguet is adopting and institutionalizing a national project that promotes and ensures safe and healthy pregnancy among rural folks.

Councilor John B. Kim and his fellow council members are about to pass an ordinance on the matter, thus ensuring the continued implementation of the Women's Health and Safe Motherhood Project in the town.

A project of the Department of Health, the WHSMP not only integrates women's health and safe motherhood into the regular services of the country's health units, but also promotes the use of safe home delivery kits, advocates increased intake of vital micronutrients during pregnancy and lactation, and sets up dedicated facilities for pregnant women in selected areas.

Thus, the project involves the mobilization of national and local government agencies, community and people's organizations, and the media.

However, the WHSMP, as conceived and funded by the DoH, is onstream for only five years, and its continued implementation at the community level beyond this year shall become the responsibility of the local government units (LGUs) in the country's priority areas.

This scheme is based on the principle of local autonomy, which has devolved substantial powers from the central government to the country's LGUs.

Responding to the challenge of self-governance, the Sangguniang Bayan of this town has come out with the bill "Ordinance Institutionalizing Women's Health and Safe Motherhood in the Municipality of La Trinidad, Benguet and Providing Funds Thereof."

The case . . .

(From page B13)

"The congress offers fresh perspectives from distinguished researchers and experts on the prevention and treatment of atherosclerosis," Dr. Sy and Prof. Edward Janus, the current president of the Asian Pacific Society of Atherosclerosis and Vascular Diseases, assure the participants.

They are inviting all medical practitioners to grab this rare opportunity to interact with international and local experts, and in the process, learn the latest on atherosclerosis.

For inqueries, call up the secretariat at (632) 687-2841 and 678-7073 or e-mail at philipid@pworld.net.ph.

(The stories in Medical Files are based on the case histories of actual patients. Some information have been changed to hide the patient's identity. Aside from the medical information, it stresses the socio-psychological impact of disease on the patient. Dr. Castillo is a past president and current chair of the Specialty Board of Adult Cardiology of the Philippine Heart Association/Philippine College of Cardiology. For comments or inquiries, e-mail raffymd@i-manila.com.)

Drug therapy vs bypass surgery in coronary heart disease

BY PROF. RAMON F. ABARQUEZ JR., MD
Contributor

ILLUSTRATION: AG RODRIGUEZ

NENA V., then an obese 50-year-old Filipino-Chinese businesswomen, felt like just got a jolt of electricity when she was told by her physician she needed to undergo a heart bypass surgery.

She was a smoker, with high blood pressure and on-and-off chest heaviness. Her coronary angiogram, a procedure to visualize blockage in the heart arteries by X-ray using a dye, showed occlusion of three coronary arteries. Nena has always avoided seeing her family physician and she just could not imagine herself going under the knife.

There are hundreds, probably thousands of Filipinos in the same situation as Nena. Agreeing to a heart surgery is a most difficult decision they have to make. They may have various reasons ranging from financial to psychological factors. Hence, although theoretically, there may be some indication for bypass surgery, the physician finds himself in an equally difficult position to assess whether or not medical treatment may be optimized instead of proceeding immediately with surgery.

In patients with established occlusion of the heart arteries, the physician should always consider the possibility of developed collateral circulation which is nature's way to compensate enabling the blood vessels to come to each other's rescue. With adequate collateral circulation; small arteries arising from insignificantly occluded vessels may help maintain the blood flow to areas supposed to be supplied by the occluded arteries. As in Nena's case, despite her three occluded arteries, her chest discomfort is not increasing in intensity, duration and frequency that would suggest a stable coronary artery disease.

As in Nena's case, a so-called therapeutic lifestyle change or TLC is imperative. Trying to identify and treat all modifiable risk factors such as high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes, elevated blood cholesterol, obesity, sedentary lifestyle and smoking can go a long way in alleviating their symptoms and improving their clinical outcome.

Important medications

In addition to TLC, modern medicine has now provided important medications, which can help patients with coronary heart disease.

Aspirin can reduce the platelet adhesiveness, which is involved in blood clot formation. Platelet clumping can aggravate restricted circulation through the already narrowed blood vessels. Nitrates, either placed under the tongue (sublingual) during chest pains or taken as a regular medication, can relax narrowed blood vessels. Prolonged intake of nitrates can produce the so-called nitrate tolerance leading to loss of efficacy of the nitrates. To minimize this, other agent like vitamin C (ascorbic acid) or angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors (ACEIs) such as perindopril (Coversyl) may be given. Some ACEIs have also been shown to prevent complications such as heart failure and improve survival in patients following a heart attack. A recent landmark trial, the Progress, has also shown that an ACEI (Coversyl) may also significantly prevent recurrent stroke even in those who do not have high blood pressure.

Betablockers such as metoprolol (Betaloc) are frequently given to patients with stable angina on the assumption that the chest pain is due to increased oxygen demand of the heart muscles. Betablockers can reduce oxygen demand by reducing contraction of the heart muscles. However, then and up to the present, there is no evidence that betablockers can prolong life in chronic stable angina. There is strong evidence though that it can improve survival in those who had already suffered from a previous heart attack. It should not be given to patients with asthma, severe heart failure and coronary vessel spasm.

Lately, scientific evidence has been provided for the use of cholesterol-lowering drugs, particularly the statins, in patients with coronary heart disease and even in those with average cholesterol levels. Statins have been shown to reduce cardiovascular events such as heart attack, stroke and deaths. The Avert study reported that atorvastatin (Lipitor) showed the same benefit as balloon angioplasty, a procedure that dilates occluded arteries using a balloon-tipped catheter inserted through the groin.

Another important mechanism, which is not well appreciated but should be properly addressed in patients with angina or chest pain, is cellular ischemia. Microvascular ischemia or a faulty circulation in the tiny blood vessels of the heart can aggravate occlusive problems in the bigger blood vessels. Positron emission tomography (PET) scan is the current diagnostic method to assess cell function or viability and has been shown in some studies to detect ischemia much more accurately than angiography. Dobutamine stress test, done by infusing dobutamine to increase heart contraction and provoke coronary insufficiency, is another diagnostic test to establish microvascular ischemia.

Coronary reserve is adequate in 20 to 30 percent of patients with occluded blood vessels but with stable or silent ischemia without electrocardiographic (ECG) findings. Only 8 percent may require intervention such as bypass surgery. Our patient Nena showed adequate coronary reserve based on her PET scan despite her three occluded vessels. Trimetazidine (Vastarel) was thus given in addition to her other medicines to improve her microvascular ischemia.

The American College of Cardiology and American Heart Association guidelines on coronary artery bypass graft surgery show that after 10 years, surgical survival is only 5.7 months more compared to medical treatment. Furthermore, after 5, 10 and 15 years, repeat surgery has to be performed in 25, 50 and 75 percent of cases, respectively. At present, there is no interventional procedure that will prevent future heart attack since a significantly occluded coronary vessel is usually stable. More important, a heart attack is due to the rupture of the rust-like atherosclerotic plaques in the arteries leading to blood clots that can occlude even a nonsignificantly blocked coronary artery.

Thus, current knowledge and information indicate that surgical intervention has limited survival benefits except in left main disease (blockage of the main left coronary artery) and in three-vessel disease (blockage of three arteries) with reduced heart function or failing hearts. Heart attack is not prevented by surgical intervention but is a risk during heart surgery. On the other hand, faster symptom relief particularly of bothersome chest pains can be achieved with bypass surgery among cases not responding well to drug treatment.

Nena is now 65 years old. Her case exemplifies a well-documented case of coronary artery occlusive disease stable for the past 15 years, with adequate coronary reserve and preserved heart function provided by medical treatment and lifestyle modification. She hopes and prays she remains stable so her physician will never have to tell her again that she needs bypass surgery.

In conclusion, the ideal management of the heart patient is greatly dependent on the analysis of the case with assessment of all the risk factors and associated illnesses rather than a routine use of anti-angina agents or the straightforward recommendation of bypass surgery. After all, the physicians' main goal is to prolong the patients' lives and not only to fix rusty pipes.

(Dr. Abarquez is professor emeritus at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine, an academician of the National Academy of Science and Technology and is a member of the scientific advisory board of Charter, an acronym for Clinical Hypertension and Atherosclerosis Research on Therapies, Epidemiology and Risk management. For feedback or inquiry, e-mail raffymd@i-manila.com.ph.)

Margarita Liboro Delgado, Editor
all about élan
[é la'] flair, distinction, class
Howard Borja, Art Director

Discovering Joy!

PERHAPS, one of the most difficult lessons to learn in one's lifetime is how to find happiness and live a joy-filled life no matter what your circumstances are. Some of us find the path sooner than the others. Some, lose themselves...never quite understanding the profound truths that the wise men and women have celebrated through the years.

In this December issue of Élan, join us as we discover the path to joy through the eyes of a young woman relishing her independence in Paris for the first time; **Meryl**, a breast cancer survivor who finds that laughter is truly the best medicine; **Victor**, the street child who was taught to dance to the tune of pure joy; three women who discovered the secret of giving to others and reaping the rewards, and so much more.

Whatever it is, remember that "happiness is not a station you arrive at, but a manner of traveling. Joy is not in things; it is in us. And if it exists in each of us, then it is always within reach."

So this Christmas, go ahead, reach out and find your joy.

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Local Beat, World Beat, A Lot Of Heartbeat...

BY JEANNIE E. JAVELOSA

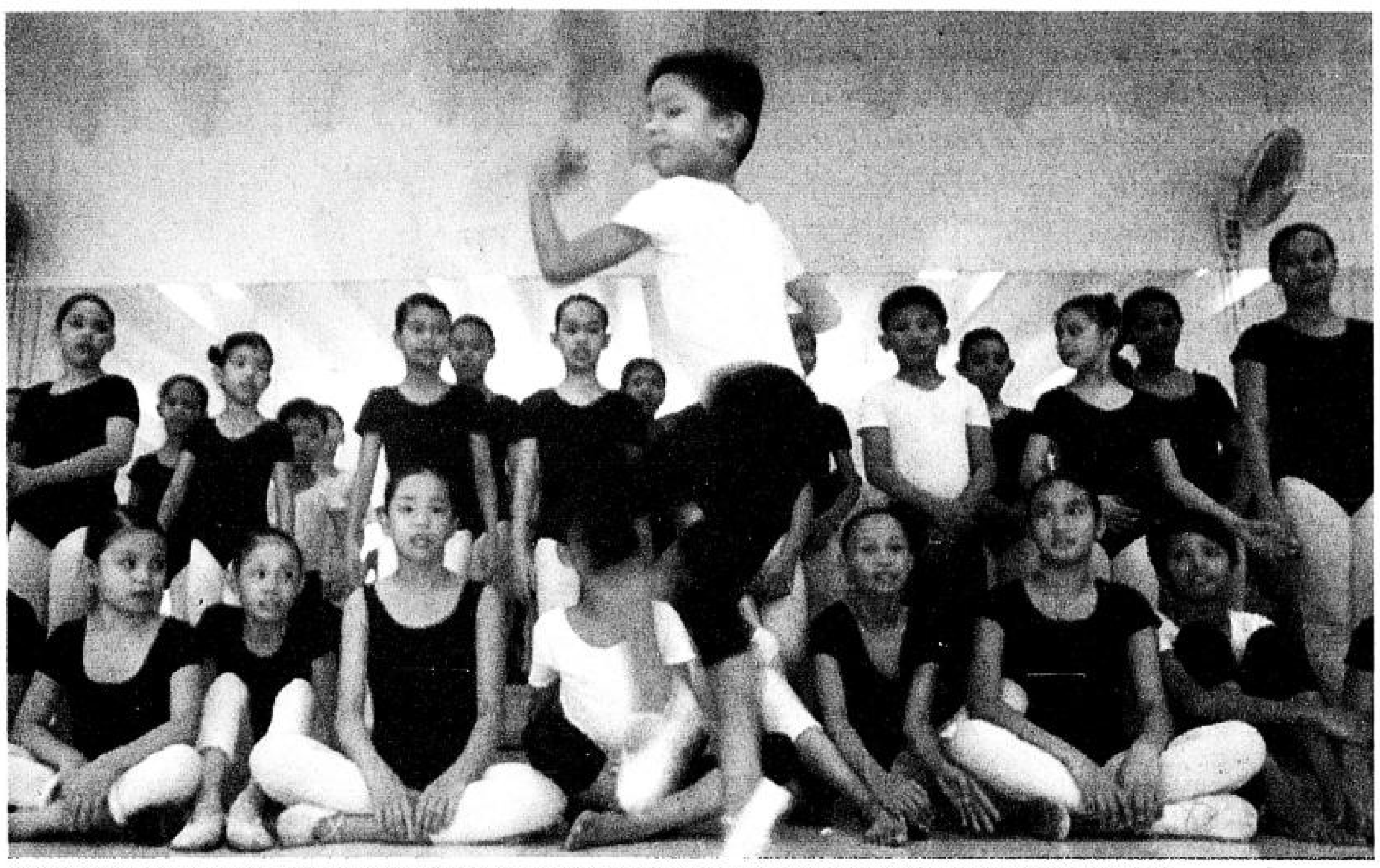
PHOTOS BY JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

BALLET dancers at the Manila Dance Center

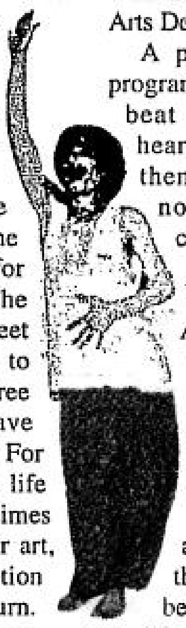
I HAD seen them in a number of performances, these dancing street children under the tutelage of choreographers **Tony Fabella, Luther Perez** and **Eddie Elejar**, and each time, I was transported to a level of pure enjoyment as I watched them hip-hop and jazz-up to the rhythm of the music. What was always striking to see was the pure happiness in their faces—the happiness of being able to dance, to express themselves in movement. So infectious was their joy that we in the crowd would inevitably be moving to the music, smiles appearing on our faces as we stood in fascination watching young children so technically proficient in their expression.

Perhaps what made watching them so much more enjoyable was the thought that once, in their past, these urban poor children were part of a vicious cycle of poverty—where life's options were almost nil, where roaming the streets meant being susceptible and falling prey to the lure of drugs, gangs and prostitution.

So when I was told that one little tyke of a 10-year old boy named **Victor Maguad** had stolen the limelight from professional dancers of Ballet Philippines during the finale of a recent performance—a suite entitled *Tadyak and Tambol* choreographed by **Tony Fabella**—I could not help but laugh. No doubt the little **Victor** would have kept pace with the professionals' technical skills in turn after turn, pirouette after pirouette, reflecting in one so young the discipline of training as well as the determination to carve a life away from poverty, to move towards a different life—one of exultation in movement, music and emotion.


VICTOR Maguad shows his skill in ballet while his classmates watch at the Aurora Quezon School in San Andres, Manila

Victor is one of the many street children now dancing their hearts away. And they certainly made their mentors and sponsors proud when the group, only six years old, was awarded a national prize by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts as one of 10 outstanding dance groups during an International Dance Day Festival in 1999. Even more heartwarming was their international stint as young ambassadors of goodwill for the country in Bosnia and Japan. They continue to receive invitations to perform abroad.



Such success stories have become the inspiration for the group's continued striving for excellence in their art. The story of these dancing street children is also testimony to the commitment that the three choreographer-teachers have affirmed for many years. For **Fabella, Elejar** and **Perez**, life has been made richer many times over by the sharing of their art, and by the love and affection that the children give in return.

Happily, there continues to be funding support from local government—from former **Quezon City Mayor Mel Mathay** to incumbent **Sonny Belmonte** and **Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.**

On Dec. 14, **Tony Fabella** and his dancing kids from the Quezon City Performing Arts School showed off the different dancing styles in their repertoire in a one-hour performance held at the Quezon Memorial Circle. Marked as a Christmas performance, this event of the continuing arts education program is a special project of Mayor **Sonny Belmonte** in coordination with the Quezon City Performing Arts Development Foundation.

A post-script in the event's program says: "local beat, world beat and a lot of heartbeat...nothing can keep them from dancing." Truly, nothing can keep these children from continually striving for the joy that they so obviously experience. And as for the rest of us who watch from the sidelines, surely nothing can give us greater joy than seeing the talents and potential of our youth being realized, while giving them a chance, an alternative, a path, to fight the poverty that continues to be a blight on our national life.

Embracing Life With Courageous Laughter

(The author who is a Director and producer talks about how to look cancer in the eye...with a sense of humor.)

BY MERYL SCHLACHTERMAN

I WAS in my early 40s with a history of cancer in the family. From the moment I felt a lump the size of a turned-over teaspoon where there wasn't one a month before, I felt an invisible camera panning around me just like in some melodrama. The first thought in my mind was "Shut that darn camera off! I've got to lose some weight!" But with my family history, I knew I had no time to waste. The mammogram led to the ultra-sound, and by the time I went under the knife for the biopsy that turned into a lumpectomy, my breasts felt like they had been poked, pressed, mashed (and I'd like to add "fondled", but no such luck) by half the city.

Groggy the next morning, the first thing I checked was my chest. With all the bandages around it, it looked like breast augmentation! The doctor didn't like what he saw and performed a lumpectomy. Five days later the results came in—invasive ductal carcinoma. I stared out of his window...again the invisible camera pans and I snap back into life—"So what do we do next?" Modified radical mastectomy, he said. In other words, the left boob had to go. I whipped out my Filofax: three-day convention here, four-day shoot there, overnight editing for two weeks. I gave him a date around two months down the road. My doctor pointed to his whiteboard: my next operation was scheduled two days away! I had these visions of animated cancer cells hunched over in a war room planning the invasion of the rest of my body!

Does one's sense of mortality heighten one's spirituality? I guess it does, but my experience came as a natural flow

The League of Single-Breasted Women

I check into the hospital again—this time, I'm really getting nervous. After the operation, I spent the next four days in recovery. Out came the Scotch for everyone except me and the next thing you knew, there was a party going on. I had officially joined "The League of Single Breasted Women" and was celebrating life! Later, the doctor lays it to me straight. There is metastasis and I will have to undergo chemo and radiation. The oncologist calls a Stage 3B! Huh? Two months ago there is nothing and today you say I'm half a stage away from terminal cancer? I am to expect hair loss and weight gain. Weight gain? More weight? Oh pahleeze...I need that like I need a hole in my head—my class silver jubilee is in a month and everyone is trying to look like they did in high school and you are telling me that I am going to gain weight?

"IT didn't take Mitch long before he proposed to me, bald as a billiard ball."

"I KNEW I was picked for this. It doesn't have to be a death sentence."

A few weeks before the big reunion, I tell the class that I have breast cancer. Being able to throw in some of my dry humor helped everyone deal with it. By the day of our silver jubilee, I could not join the class in the *velada*, because I was too susceptible to catching the slightest virus. I sat in my air-conditioned broadcast van directing the coverage of the program while they sweated it out in the old Assumption auditorium. The day after, convinced it was time to shave my head, I see my dear old friend Tinette Ozamiz, who owns a beauty salon. Saying with concern and tenderness that "it's too early to do that. Besides, maybe it won't all fall off", she runs her finger through my hair to demonstrate how thick it still is when a clump of hair falls into her hand! She instinctively tries to put it back on, maybe thinking that it would be able to stick back. We're both in stitches, laughing hysterically in the middle of her salon, looking like two of the Three Stooges.

Demi Moore in a baseball cap

Everyone loves the Peter Pan cut she did for me. Life goes on and except for the bruise in my wrist where the first chemo was infused, I am holding up pretty good. At the second chemo session I'm starting to feel like a pincushion as they try to find a vein to infuse the stuff. The day after, I leave the hospital for a video-shoot and as we are setting up the studio, someone turns on an industrial blower behind me and I see my crew giggling! My very short hair was gently fluttering off my head and in twenty minutes I went from Peter Pan to Kojak—which lead to that " Demi Moore in a baseball cap" look for me. With the help of friends, we had the Elsa Klensch Wig, the Caroline of Monaco Scarfed Look and that Bo Derek Get-Up, not to mention my collection of the biggest earrings and most fantastic scarves!

There were good days and not so good days. The day after a chemo session was so energizing from the steroids that I could do all my shoots. The next three days, however, I was totally flat on my back. With each chemo session (and I went through nine), I was amazingly gaining weight yet feeling as if a truck ran me over every other week. One can always tell a chemo patient—we carry that plump look with amazingly great skin. You see, there is some justice after all—with the poisoned cells comes cell renewal: along with what is known as the Chemo curl comes younger-looking skin that puts all Retinol products to shame.

Could I have one last, loving relationship?

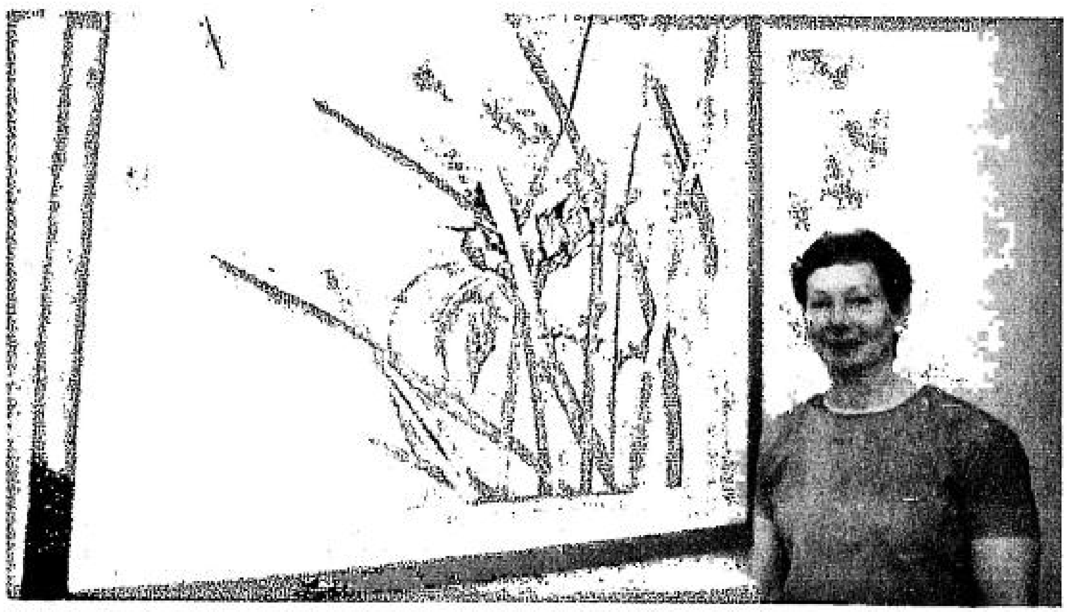
Does one's sense of mortality heighten one's spirituality? I guess it does, but my experience came as a natural flow rather than some sudden epiphany, as I was forced to slow down. I returned to my transcendental meditation, taking up Qigong and picking up the Silva Method of visualizing my chemo drugs zapping away at my devil-horned cancer cells while listening to Enya and Davol. I had continued conversations with God thanking Him for every turn and every minute—one day, I asked a favor—that for whatever time I had left, could I just have one last loving relationship?

To this, how could I not help saying to myself in the next breath, "But for heaven's sake, where are you going to find someone to take me like I am—bald, with one breast and four kids?" Well, within a month, the man I was supposed to have married twenty years ago came back into my life. It was a nervous and giddy first meeting at a New Year's Eve party with my bald head wrapped in a scarf. The camera pans again like those delightfully mushy movies. It didn't take Mitch long before he proposed to me, bald as a billiard ball though I was, and I walked down the aisle with a turban covering my patchy hair regrowth. We continue to laugh a lot and treat every day with humor. His strong gentleness and a shared positive outlook have nursed me back to my old self.

I knew I was picked for this. I would like to think that in the course of my life, I can help someone else deal with living with cancer—it doesn't have to be a death sentence. It's been five years since the cancer, and as my classmates celebrate their silver wedding anniversaries, Mitch and I look forward to our fifth. And with grace from above, we will one day hit our own twenty-fifth.

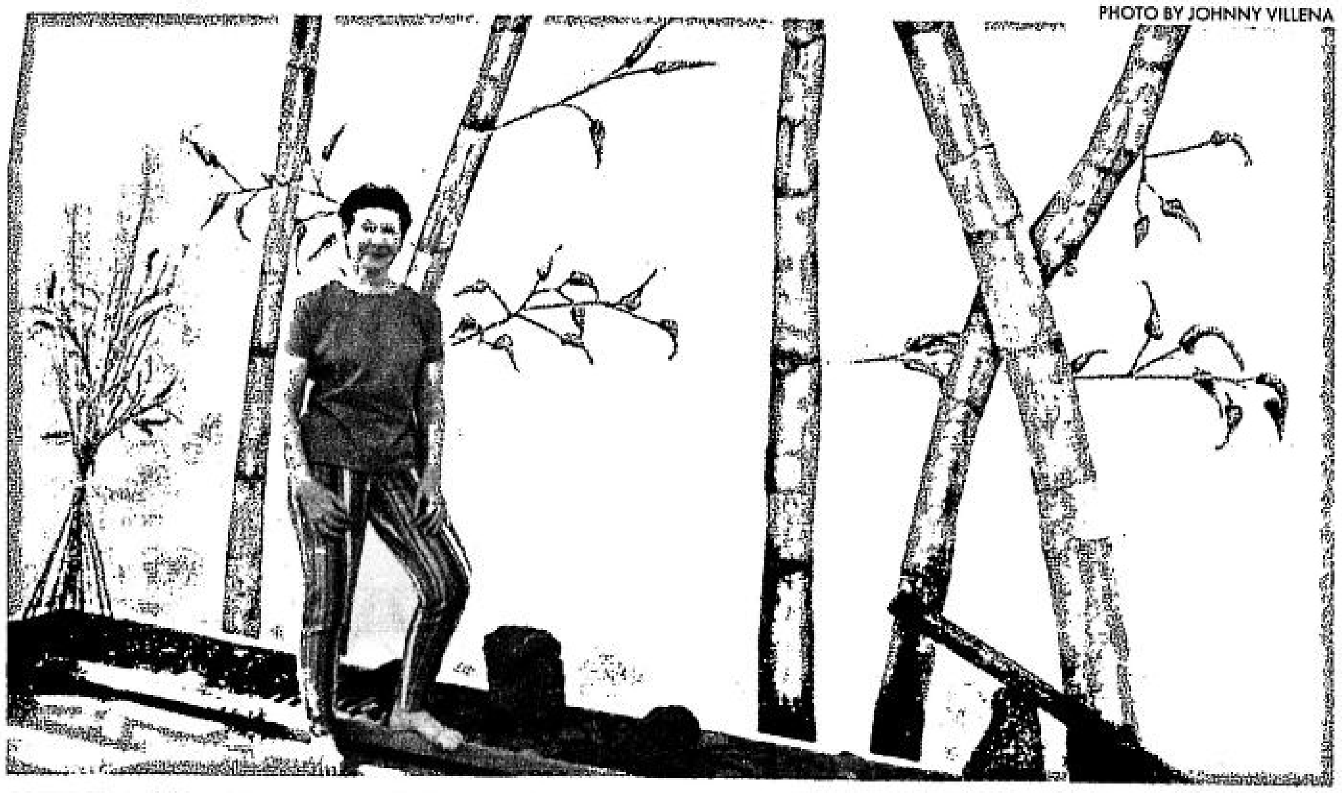
EMBRACING life to the fullest

DIRECTING my class *velada* at the Assumption decked out in my 'Caroline of Monaco scarfed look.'



FOR Anita, the essence of both painting and poem, as in haiku, was of living in the precise moment of an experience.

PHOTO BY JOHNNY VILLENA



ANITA Tortorici beside her "garden" of *trompe l'oeil* bamboo trees

Joy Transformed

BY DINA L. PATERNO

ANITA Tortorici is a picture of grace and restraint. Like her paintings, which adorn the walls of her new home in Manila since moving here in September this year, one right away senses the harmony, the balance, the completeness of her world. We ungraciously imposed ourselves on her the evening we met at a common friend's dinner, intrigued by the "indoor garden" that she was in the process of painting on her walls. As she ushered us inside her home, the "garden" of *trompe l'oeil* bamboo trees and a row of real slate stones at the base, evoked serenity and calm. It wasn't a surprise therefore when she told us that this was her husband **Ed**'s favorite spot in the apartment.

Anita has been painting since she was three years old. At the age of four, while waiting for her mother who was a preschool teacher at The Bank Street school in New York City, she painted a woman with slanted eyes, wearing a pagoda-shaped hat in colors of Mandarin blue and red. It was a picture she had only inside her mind. At six, she had her painting exhibited at The Children's Museum of New York. Years later, the picture in her mind would become a real experience when she moved with her husband and children to Hong Kong. In 1991, she had her first and so far, only Asian exhibit in Hong Kong. A feng shui master at some point told **Anita** that she had "the heart and soul of an Asian woman."

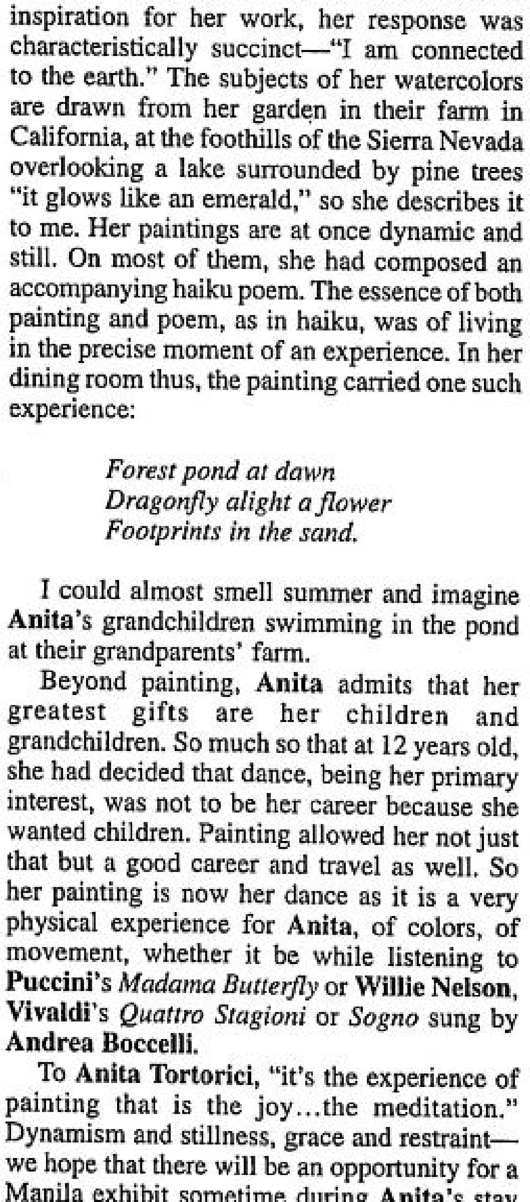
The ancient Chinese believe that "nature is the great space and that heaven, earth and man are one." When asked where **Anita** derives her inspiration for her work, her response was characteristically succinct—"I am connected to the earth." The subjects of her watercolors are drawn from her garden in their farm in California, at the foothills of the Sierra Nevada overlooking a lake surrounded by pine trees "it glows like an emerald," so she describes it to me. Her paintings are at once dynamic and still. On most of them, she had composed an accompanying haiku poem. The essence of both painting and poem, as in haiku, was of living in the precise moment of an experience. In her dining room thus, the painting carried one such experience:

> *Forest pond at dawn*
> *Dragonfly alight a flower*
> *Footprints in the sand.*

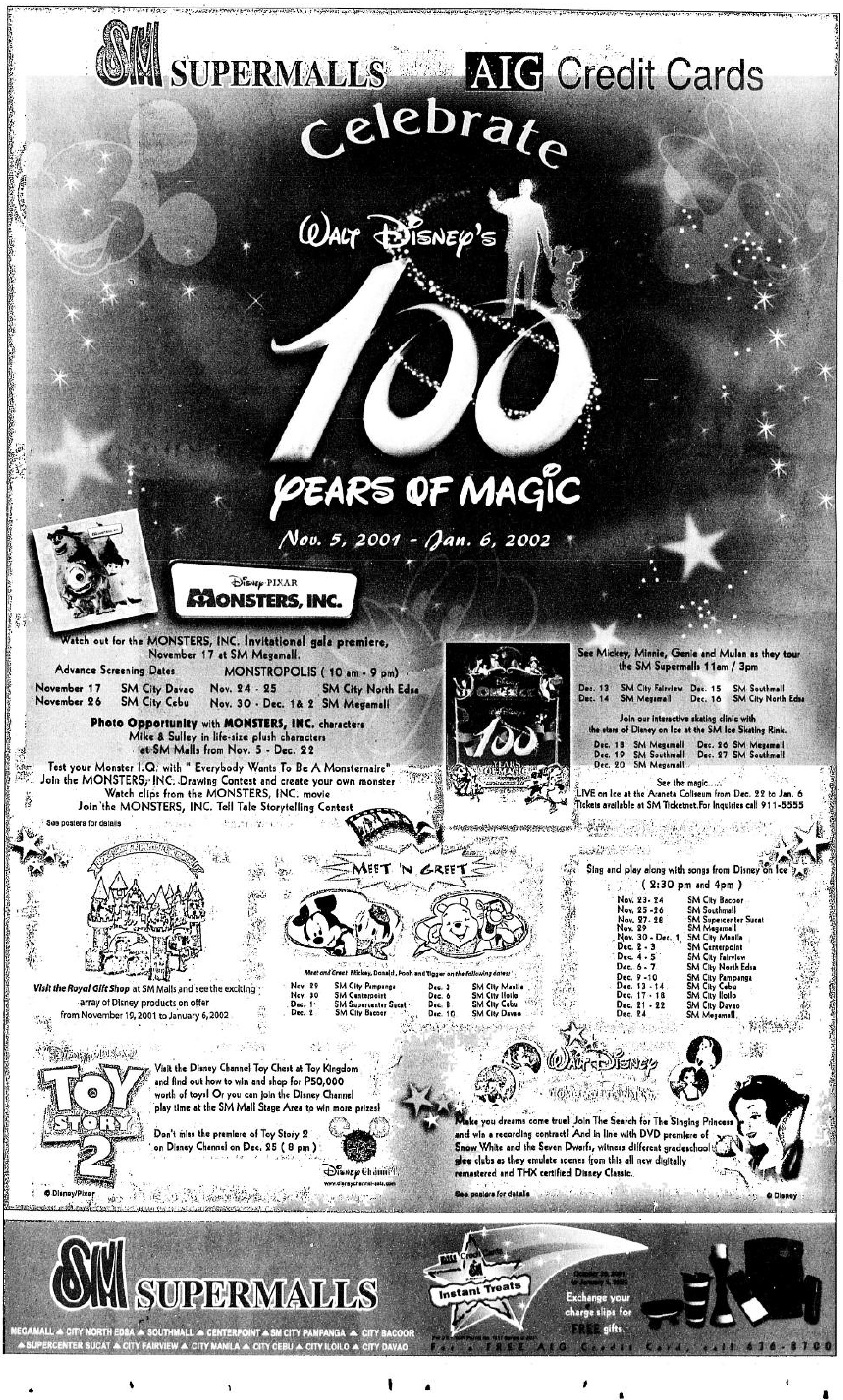
I could almost smell summer and imagine **Anita**'s grandchildren swimming in the pond at their grandparents' farm.

Beyond painting, **Anita** admits that her greatest gifts are her children and grandchildren. So much so that at 12 years old, she had decided that dance, being her primary interest, was not to be her career because she wanted children. Painting allowed her not just that but a good career and travel as well. So her painting is now her dance as it is a very physical experience for **Anita**, of colors, of movement, whether it be while listening to **Puccini**'s *Madama Butterfly* or **Willie Nelson**, **Vivaldi**'s *Quattro Stagioni* or *Sogno* sung by **Andrea Boccelli**.

To **Anita Tortorici**, "it's the experience of painting that is the joy…the meditation." Dynamism and stillness, grace and restraint—we hope that there will be an opportunity for a Manila exhibit sometime during **Anita**'s stay in her momentary home.



ANITA Tortorici



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Dec. 2	SM City Bacoor	Dec. 10	SM City Davao

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Nov. 27- 28	SM Supercenter Sucat
Nov. 29	SM Megamall
Nov. 30 - Dec. 1	SM City Manila
Dec. 2 - 3	SM Centerpoint
Dec. 4 - 5	SM City Fairview
Dec. 6 - 7	SM City North Edsa
Dec. 9 -10	SM City Pampanga
Dec. 13 - 14	SM City Cebu
Dec. 17 - 18	SM City Iloilo
Dec. 21 - 22	SM City Davao
Dec. 24	SM Megamall

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AT A street festival in Vienna, Austria

ON THE outskirts of Brugge, Belgium

SAUSOUCI, the palace of Frederick the Great in Potsdam, Germany

Independence… Living In The Moment

BY RICA YULO

> "There were so many moments when a rush of pure joy would catch in my throat and I'd be so glad to be alive."

THE IDEA of living away from home wasn't originally mine. For as long as I can remember, my mom encouraged me to take a few years abroad, finish college elsewhere, join an exchange student program. Her reason: an exercise in independence would do me good. And it was only after I graduated from Ateneo that I decided to finally take her up on her offer. Turns out my year in Paris was one of the most self-defining experiences of my life.

I chose Paris because if I could be adept at a third language, it'd definitely be French. I'd been to Europe once before as well, and Paris was just breathtaking. Though initially apprehensive about living all by myself in a strange land, I took to it in a matter of weeks.

I found a studio on Rue de l'Universite, in the seventh district. I don't think I could have lived in a better neighborhood. One of the city's most famous bakeries was on my morning route, the provider of my daily chocolate croissant on my way to school. Around the corner was Rue Cler, a street of frenetic activity with its cheese shops, fruit stand, butcher shops, cafes, and most importantly, the best crepe stand in the city.

I can't say what it was about Paris that I fell in love with most. The city itself ranks high on my list, of course. Every walk I ever took was a highlight, especially in autumn. There was this park I walked though everyday to get from my French language lab to a classroom building of the Sorbonne. When the leaves of the trees started turning from red to gold, it was so beautiful I often had to stop, sit on a park bench and drink it in. The Eiffel tower, which is the first thing most Parisians probably see in the morning when they look out of their windows, was still awesome to behold my last day in the city. On Bastille Day, they held a magnificent fireworks display by the tower, and an orchestra played in time to each burst of color in the night sky. I had never seen anything like it.

Cliched as it may sound, there is a certain truth in Paris' moniker "City of Love." Romance is almost tangible in the air. I'd feel it on Pont Alexandre III spanning the Seine, over glasses of wine on tables outside cafes, in meals prepared with such meticulous detail, in the works of art in their countless museums, in the architecture of their pretty churches, in blatant displays of affection by couples strolling hand-in-hand, on the steps of the Sacre Couer in Montmarte with the twinkling lights of Paris at my feet.

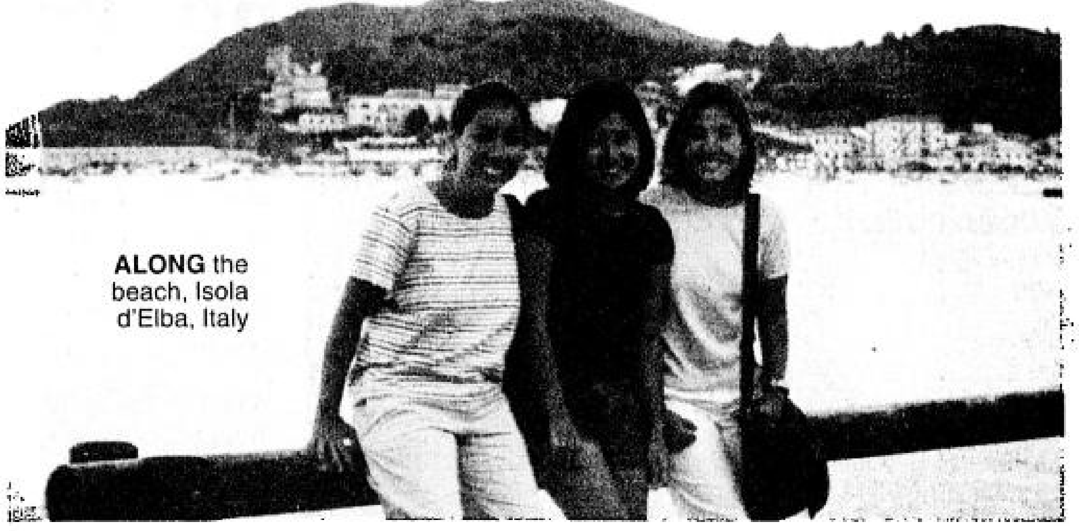
Besides my leisurely discovery of the city, I enjoyed my visits to other European countries immensely. I had a few friends studying on the continent as well. One of my favorite haunts was Brugge, a tiny Belgian town only two and a half hours away by train. I love the way only an hour's plane ride separates places so totally different from each other. It was fun finding out the quirks of each culture, seeing paintings in the flesh and places you once only read about in books. It was a very, very emotional moment for me when I got to see Gustav Klimt's *The Kiss* in a Viennese Gallery.

I was fascinated with the classes I took. Besides French, I had a full load for two semesters of various liberal arts courses ranging from Literature to History, Film and Political Science. My favorites were Revolutionary Literature, Political Economy of Developing Countries and Paris through its Architecture. We'd take long walks and study bridges, museums, fountains and churches alongside the history at the time they were constructed. It's a whole different experience learning history in a place so steeped in it.

I find it difficult to articulate the myriad of emotions I felt each day I lived there. There were so many moments when a rush of pure joy would catch in my throat and I'd be so glad to be alive. Each time it'd seem the world would stretch out its arms to embrace me, make me feel one with the universe and show me its countless possibilities.

I guess, simply put, I was very happy that year I was away. Despite having to deal with clogged drains, a two-degree winter and periodic bouts of homesickness that would hit me out of the blue, I realized that living alone agreed with me. Maybe it was partly the novelty of leaving everything familiar and plunging into uncharted territory. Doing my laundry for the first time, paying rent, being able to stick to a budget for example-little things like that made me feel very grown-up. Discovering that people regardless of race or religion share the same preoccupations and get a kick out the same things was a relief. I learned that it is possible for two people who have grown up with entirely different worldviews to make a connection and form a bond. But maybe the most important thing I learned was the importance of introspection and the ability to feel comfort in solitude.

I'll always remember Paris with love. I haven't gone back since but there's nothing in the world I would like to do more than roam its streets again and think about that time in my life when I felt most infinite.



ALONG the beach, Isola d'Elba, Italy

Setting The Music Free

RJ introduces the new "RJ 100" and says that "It's not in the years, it's in the sound!"

Ask music icon **Ramon "RJ" Jacinto** to describe what to him the "perfect music mix" should be, you'd get this line. "Radio stations," he says, "should not confine themselves to pop, rock, jazz or any particular style or era. The sole category should be sound. Listeners have the habit of surfing their radio sets because many radio stations are too limited."

RJ should know. He has been pioneering innovative radio concerts since 1963. With eight stations in key cities nationwide, the new "RJ 100" introduces a new format never before tried in the Philippines and possibly the world, under the name of "The Latest and Greatest Hits."

Made possible by computer technology, RJ 100 meticulously researches hits of three to four decades that musically match with today's top 40 hits. With a well-trained programming staff and thirty thousand pre-screened songs in RJ's computer memory banks, RJ 100 has different teams of programmers of varying ages and professions putting together the song lists. Where other FM stations use computer software to rotate the music, RJ 100 believes that only people can "segue" the songs. After all, music listening is an emotional experience, and "segueing" the songs is the key to putting a wide variety of hits together…setting the music free.

BARBIE'S Cradle's Barbie Almalbis

RJ with children. From left are Bea, Natalia, granddaughter Arianna Jacinto-Colamonici, RJ (guitar) and Luccia, with band members Benjie Evia (drums and Melissa Manuel (singer)

BETTINA Osmeña, Opap Villonco, Jun Lopez of Rustan's Supermarket, Menchu Lopez of Rustan's Flower Shop, Frannie Jacinto and Nini Licaros

EVA Abesamis, Frannie Jacinto, Opap Villonco, Toni Gregory, RJ, and Elsa Payumo.

JOE Mari Chan and Lisa Chan singing "Christmas in our hearts"

PHOTOS BY CHITO VECINA

FREESTYLE. Jinky Vidal, Top Suzara, Tat Suzara, Carlo Tapia, Nikki Gabardo and Gerald Banzon

PHOTOS BY CHITO VECINA AND ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Meditations On Zobel and Zen

ZOBEL and Zen, a collection of 23 Iris prints of art photographer and businessman **Jaime Zobel de Ayala**. The exhibit is on display from Dec. 6 to 22 at the ArtSpace in Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati.

Zobel and Zen is **Zobel**'s second collection of photographs which makes use of Iris printing, a new technology in digital imaging now used as a viable fine arts medium. From the vibrant explosion of flowers in ***Passages,*** **Zobel** focuses on the subdued browns and grays of stones and seashells, giving the photographs in a meditative if not transcendent spirit. Each Iris print is available in five numbered editions signed by the artist.

Art critic **Jose Y. Dalisay** observes, "The artist of Zobel and Zen dares to raise photography to philosophy—or rather, and more in keeping with his subject, to bring philosophy down to concrete forms."

"I do not profess to have a profound knowledge of Zen," explains **Zobel**, "but what I know of it seems to express perfectly what I am otherwise approaching intuitively in these works. I can only hope that in the end, the viewer can contemplate these images and derive from them the same sense of well-being, mystery and peace that attended their creation."

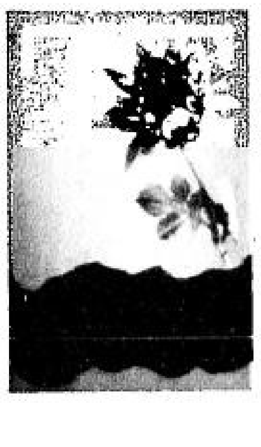
DANTE Silverio, Belen E. Silverio, Jaime Zobel, Bea Zobel, Sonia Ner

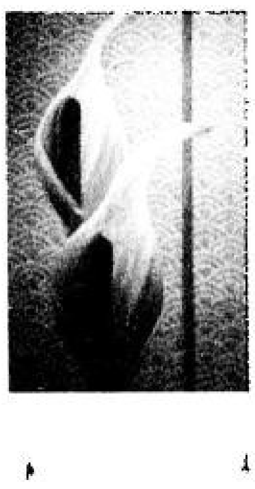
BUBOY Virata, Libeth Virata and Karen Santos

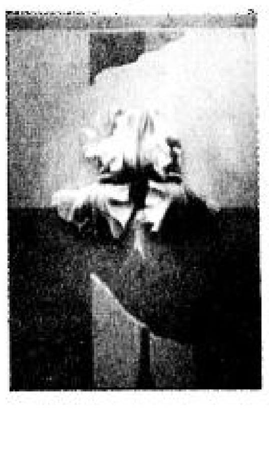
MIA Borromeo, Patsy Halffter, Tessie Luz

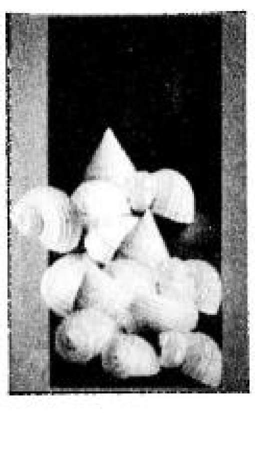
FERNANDO Zobel, Doña Bea Zobel de Ayala and Maribel G. Ongpin

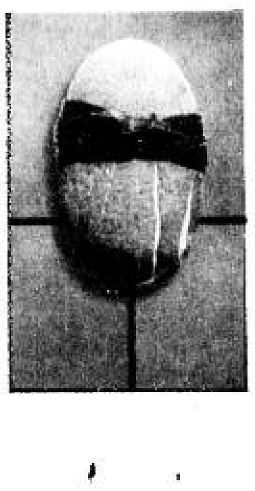
BEN Chan and Jaime Zobel de Ayala

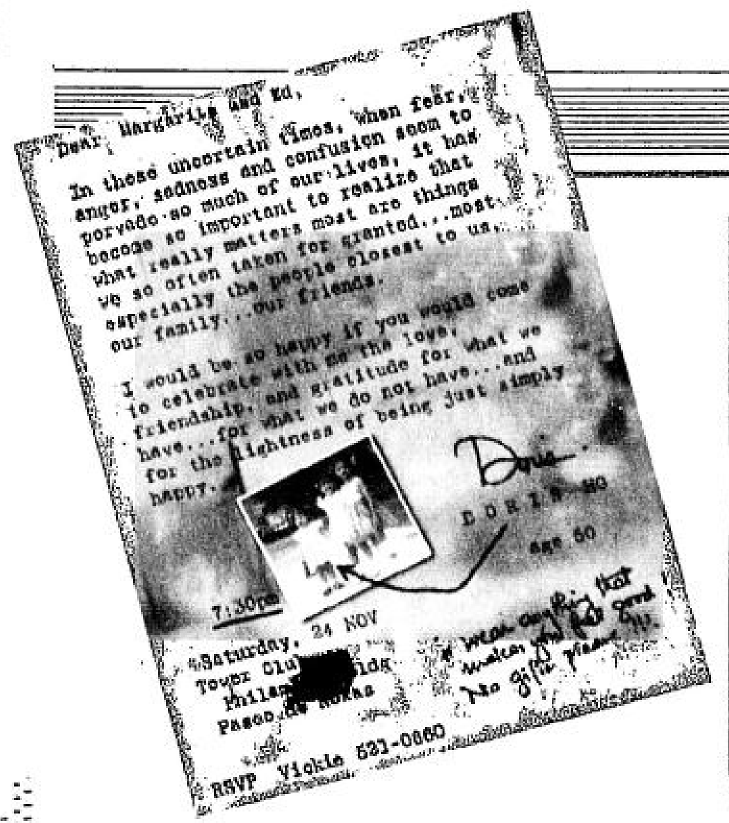












Dear Margarita and Ed,

In these uncertain times, when fear, anger, sadness and confusion seem to pervade so much of our lives, it has become so important to realize that what really matters most are things we so often taken for granted...most especially the people closest to us, our family...our friends.

I would be so happy if you would come to celebrate with me the love, friendship, and gratitude for what we have...for what we do not have...and for the lightness of being just simply happy.

Doris
DORIS HO
age 60

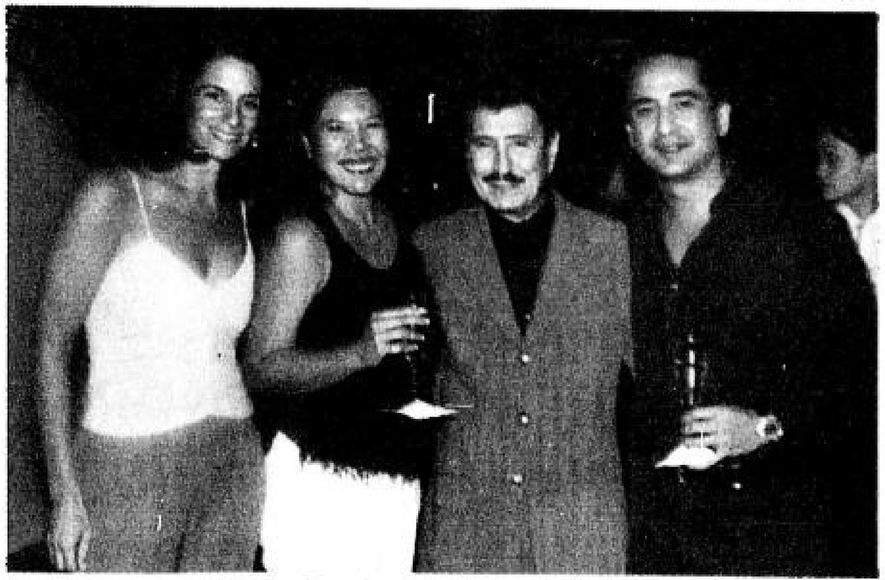
7:30pm
Saturday, 24 NOV
Tower Club [redacted]Bldg
Philam[redacted]
Paseo de Roxas

RSVP Vickie 521-0860

Wear anything that makes you feel good!!!
No gifts please

PHOTOS BY BETOY JOHNSON

BONNIE Gokson, Ernest Escaler, Doris Ho and Joyce Ma



BEA Zobel, Karen Santos, Maurice Arcache, Jaques Dupasquier

Wear Anything That Makes You Feel Good!

ANITA Magsaysay-Ho and Robert Ho with Doris

ZENAIDA Amador and Evelyn Lim Forbes

MENCHU Lopez and C.C. Chen

WHEN was the last time you felt true joy—that strong release that comes from the gut? Bigger than satisfaction, more intense than pleasurable, it's a feeling so encompassing, it almost overwhelms you. Well, Élan felt this a few weeks ago at Doris Ho's birthday celebration. Her invitation in hues of orange and yellow, with touches of mint, set the tone for an unforgettable evening, as you can see from the title of this piece.

When **Doris** decided to celebrate her natal day recently, a lot of thought went into the planning. Together with her very close friends (**Anabelle Alejandrino, Monique Villonco, Joji** and **Joey Yujuico, Ernest Escaler, Evelyn Lim Forbes, Bobby** and **Chingbee Cuenca, Raquel Garcia, Vicky**, her steady rock at the office and many others) they put together a most elegant and unique celebration at the Tower Club, PhilamLife Bldg. in Makati.

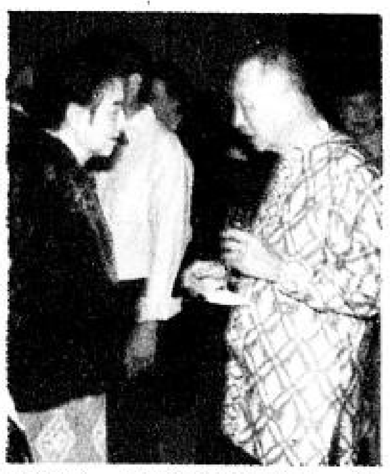
Doris wanted a meaningful coming together of people dear to her heart. Through her invitation, she requested each individual to focus on what really matters most…things we so often take for granted. Our family and friends.

> *"I would be so happy if you would come to celebrate with me the love, friendship, and gratitude for what we have… for what we do not have…and for the lightness of being just simply happy."*

And so it was. An evening of pure enjoyment and delight among the 200 guests in attendance. **Doris**' family, (her parents, **Helen, Linda, Robert, Steven**) had flown in from Hong Kong and all over the globe to surround her with love on this special day. Her friends, who make up the distinguished roster of movers and shakers in Philippine business, the academe, the arts, and fashion were there to embrace her, as well as special guests from around the world. From the sumptuous sit-down dinner where one's eyes feasted not only on the meticulously prepared food but also on the beautifully arranged roses which made up the centerpiece (with *sampaguita* petals artfully placed on a leaf, as if by accident), to the musical entertainment (emceed by **Jim Paredes**), each guest was made to feel special.

For a finale each person was given a small, individual cake with a single lighted candle to make his or her personal wish. Needless to say, in these uncertain times, when fear, anger, sadness and confusion seem to pervade so much of our lives all two hundred guests were one in making a wish for world peace. And as all stood, with lighted candles and cakes held aloft, gently swaying and singing **Burt Bacharach**'s, "What the world needs now, is love, sweet love…" one could not help but feel that release of pure exultation in being alive.

LIZZIE and Jaime Augusto Zobel



ANITA Magsaysay-Ho in conversation with Wash Sycip

TING-TING Cojuangco and Patis Tesoro

JOEY Cuisia and Vicky Garchitorena

GIGING Jalandoni Garcia and Nena Tantoco

JOSIE Lichauco and Nonoy Colayco

The Biggest Metrobank Credit Cards Bazaar Strikes Back

The Metrobank Credit Cards Christmas Shopping City will be back on December 15 & 16, 2001 from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the fully air-conditioned Le Pavillon Tent at The Metropolitan Park, Roxas Blvd. Cor. EDSA Ext., in Pasay City.

Expect a new line-up of quality goods and merchandise that will make your Christmas shopping a more rewarding experience. Choose from a wide selection of wares ranging from coffee to fruits, children's wear to embroideries, Swiss-made gadgets to home appliances, shoes, bags and everything else under one colossal roof.

Take advantage of discounts of up to 75% plus the option to pay all your bazaar purchases on installment at only 1.5% interest per month with up to 12 months to pay! Plus, you also get great buys at 0% interest on installment.

Shoppers without a Metrobank credit card or who wish to pay in cash can still get the aforementioned perks (sans the installment facility) using the "Shopping Cards" which can be bought inside Le Pavillon for only P20.00. Shoppers just load the desired value into their Shopping Cards to purchase any item. And should the card run out of money, shoppers may proceed to the nearest Shopping Card Station to have it reloaded.

Metrobank Shopping City patrons can also take a break at the two-section food tent, which offers various types of delectable specialties and snacks.

ADVT.

At the Snack Exchange
Celebrate Christmas @ SM
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Holiday goodies in fun shapes
We've got it all for you!
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AIG Credit Cards

GET YOUR CASH BACK FOR GREATER SPENDING FLEXIBILITY WITH INTEREST RATES AS LOW AS 1.6%!

Flexi-Installment Facility

October 1, 2001 to February 15, 2002

Take your friends or family out for a special Christmas bash, or go crazy bazaar shopping. You can enjoy all of that now and get your money back with AIG Credit Cards' Flexi-Installment facility! Convert all your Holiday cash spending into installment and pay them in 3, 6, 12 or 24 months for as low as only **1.6% interest per month.**

What's more, the Installment Craze is back! Get top-of-the-line appliances, furniture, hi-tech gadgets and computers, latest cellular phones, watches and jewelry you've always wanted and much more for as low as **1.6 % interest per month!**

Plus, enjoy **0% Interest** on selected items and terms from participating merchants. Hurry! Craze is from November 14 to December 23, 2001 only!

With these flexible financial offers, you get more spending power!

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3854. Series of 2001.

PAY LESS ON CHRISTMAS SPENDING AS MUCH AS 80% OFF!

AIG CREDIT CARD: THE FIRST TO GIVE AN EXCLUSIVE MEMBERS-ONLY SALE!
MEMBERS-ONLY
M.O.S.
SALE

November 21-25, 2001 & December 5-9, 2001

and

Holiday Discounts

November 10, 2001 to January 31, 2002

EARN CASH when you do your grocery shopping with your AIG Credit Card! Enjoy a 1% cash rebate from all your supermarket spending from November 10, 2001 to January 31, 2002. Value Grocer is another first only from AIG Credit Cards!

Plus, avail of up to ***40% OFF*** and enjoy special benefits in shopping, dining and leisure activities.

And, there's as much as **80% discount** in the Members-Only-Sale events where you can find toys, gadgets, designer brands and other knick knacks at incredibly low prices.

Per DTI-NCR Permit Nos. 3856, 3852 & 3834. Series of 2001

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So, head for the

AIG Credit Cards
&
SM
SUPERMALLS

Instant Treats

October 26, 2001 to January 6, 2002

The AIG Credit Card. Not just any c

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PHILAM INSURANCE
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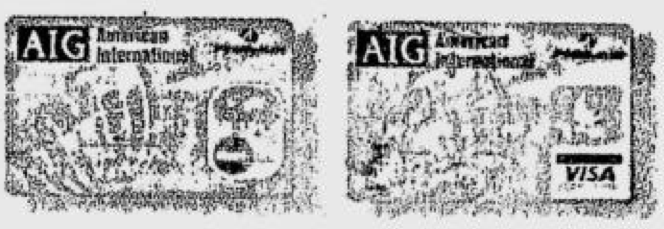

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Credit Cards.
SM Supermalls now!

EXCLUSIVE P145.00 DISCOUNT ON UNLIMITED RIDE TICKETS!

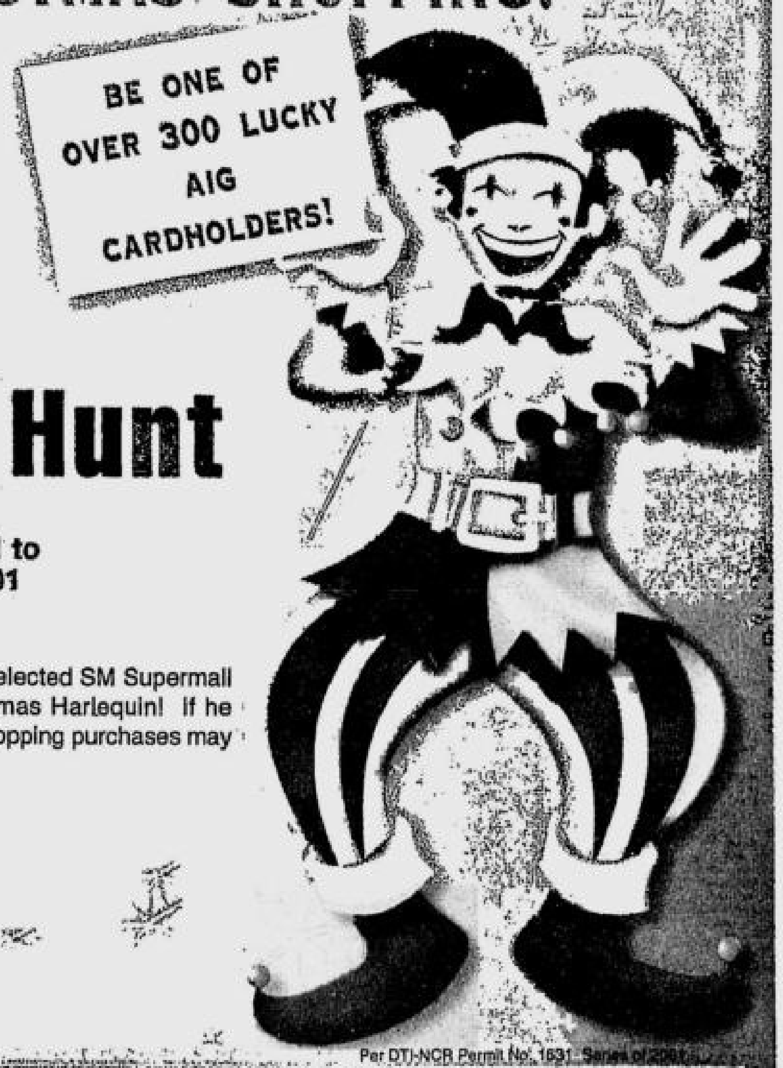
You and your family can enjoy unlimited ride tickets at Enchanted Kingdom for **only Php255*** each when you pay using your AIG Credit Card. This special price will be valid until January 31, 2002 and can only be purchased at the Enchanted Kingdom Sales Office. Call 830-2111 to 16 for more information.

Enchanted Kingdom

* Maximum of 10 tickets per day

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3834. Series of 2001.

LET AIG CREDIT CARDS PAY FOR YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING!



AIG Card Hunt

**November 17, 2001 to
December 23, 2001**

Just keep using your AIG Credit Card at selected SM Supermall branches and watch out for AIG's Christmas Harlequin! If he catches you "in the act," your Christmas shopping purchases may be FREE*!

* For a maximum of P1000 purchase.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1631. Series of 2001

GET FREE ITEMS

Simply use your AIG Credit Card for all your Christmas spending and keep your charge slips for instant gifts. Once you've completed the required accumulated amount*, present your charge slips to the AIG Representative in our Instant Treats Booth at selected SM Supermalls and exchange them for either Poetry in Clay Home Designs or our Bureau Leather Collections!

Enjoy this Yuletide offer only from AIG Credit Cards and REWARD YOURSELF this Christmas!

* completion of the required amount may be accumulated or one time purchase

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1617 Series of 2001

WITH ALL THESE PRIVILEGES, YOU SURELY WOULDN'T WANT TO BE LEFT OUT!
WANT AN AIG CREDIT CARD NOW? THERE ARE 3 EASY WAYS!

1

DROP A CARD

Watch out for AIG representatives at selected SM Supermalls! Simply drop your business card and we'll take care of the rest! From October 26, 2001 to January 6, 2002

2

Apply By Phone now! Call

636-8700

3

AIG Credit Card application forms are available at any of the participating stores in the SM Supermalls

details and inquiries, see mailers or call the AIG Customer Service Hotline at **636-8600.**

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AIG Credit Card Company Philippines, Inc.
Credit Cards

Wealth Isn't Measured By Money Alone

BY JEREMY BARNS

IN OUR day, pointing a finger at the alleged rapaciousness of the gas companies has become a fact of Philippine social and political life. The cynical among us would shake their heads if told that these companies had a social conscience, chuckling knowingly about "charm offensives" and "corporate social responsibility" as the latest marketing fad.

And yet they would be sadly wrong in at least one instance. For Petron Corporation, the local gas giant jointly owned by Saudi Aramco and the Philippine government, can point to a long and proud record of commitment to engaging with the community and giving something back to society. This record forms a real part of Petron's "wealth" as a "corporate citizen," and is generated by any company's greatest asset: its people.

For many years, Petron management and employees have given an enormous amount of time to what is now called "volunteerism," and these impulses have become so intrinsic to the corporate culture that channeling these energies has become the core of the work of the Petron Foundation, which was established five years ago in 1996.

MARILOU Erni

Ms Marilou Erni, executive director of the foundation since 1999, presides over a wide range of programs that focus on three areas: the environment, education, and health and human services.

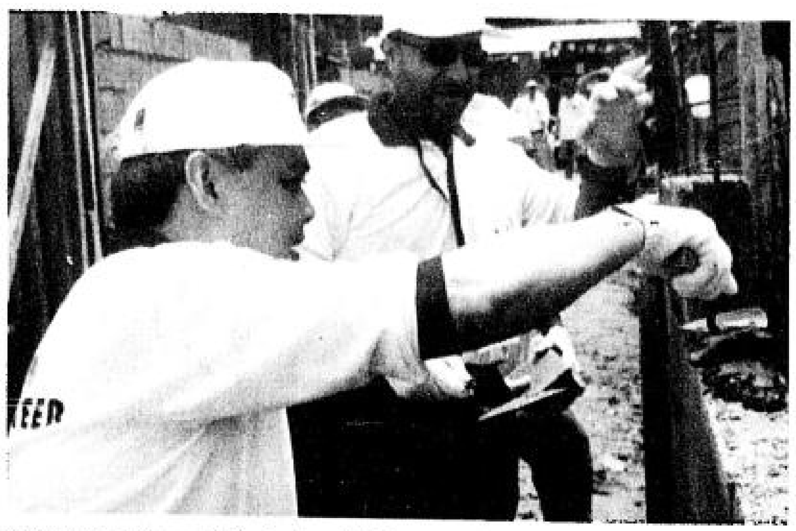
What is common to most of these programs, from *Kontra Kalat Sa Dagat*, a coastal cleanliness drive in Bataan, an area especially close to Petron because of its long-standing operations there, to *Lakbay Alalay*, which provides assistance to motorists during holiday periods, to *Habitat for Humanity*, the well-known housing program, to *Lakbayanihan*, which provides basic medical and dental care to the underprivileged, is the unstinting contribution of Petron employees at all levels.

"On our Mancom [management committee], there is 100 percent participation", says **Ms Erni**. The fact the boards of the corporation and the foundation are identical, underscores the commitment of management. As do some moving stories. For example, during relief operations organized by the foundation in the tragic Cherry Hills disaster, **Mr. Ziad Labban,** a member of the board, not satisfied with the considerable supplies that had been donated for the victims, went to a nearby *sari-sari* store and bought its entire contents. Up to his knees in mud during the foundation-sponsored drive to clean up the coastline near Mariveles, the same **Mr. Labban** would exhort the local children, who were presumably watching him with amusement and curiosity, to join him, explaining by his example and easy manner the importance to a community of a clean environment.

In general, at least 80 percent of Petron's people participate in some volunteer activity. The generous giving of their time and skills, and contributions in cash or in kind, has formed the basis of a personal bond between employees all across the company.

Ms Erni explains that when a big day comes around, in order to start out as early as possible, many employees spend the night in the office, and far from being an exclusively company affair, many bring their families and friends along. "Some of our people even use their leaves to be able to contribute more time", she adds.

Thanks to this altruism, the sheer scale of the foundation's outreach is truly astonishing. Referring to the *Lakbayanihan* program, **Ms Erni** says that "in just one day [in July this year], we were able to provide 3,000 patients in Navotas with basic health and dental care." Over the course of a single week, nearly 500 employees were helping build houses in 10 sites across the country. Over the year, 1,074 volunteers from Petron and its corporate partners responded to 1,740 incidents from Batangas to Pampanga on the two main tollways. The list goes on…disaster relief, literacy, scholarships, business-education, blood-donation, gift-giving, tree-planting.


NICK Alcantara, the chair of Petron and Motassim Al-Ma'ashouq, president of Petron, helping build homes in the "Habitat for Humanity" project.

Mr. Motassim Al-Ma'ashouq, president and chief executive officer, sums it up in this way: "We believe that we can provide joy to those who are in need of it, joy that is not measured in financial gains but from an honest and long-lasting contribution to their well-being."

"Ours is not merely riding a trend, or a popular response to a growing demand for industries to be more responsible", says **Mr. Nick Alcantara,** who as chair not only gives his full support but also makes a personal contribution whenever he can.

He explains that at bottom is "a heartfelt desire to help, to be of service," which is why volunteerism at Petron is "in full bloom and continues to encourage others, both within and outside of the office, to become instruments of social development. More than a responsibility, it is our way of life."

And a wealthy life it is indeed.

Do It With Élan

LONG before lifestyles could be purchased from catalogues, image makers and fashion designers, there were the original arbiters of good taste, who could be relied on. Unfailingly stylish and always proper, these individuals made all the difference. For this season of joy, we asked one such arbiter to share her tips with us.

Josine Elizalde on Entertaining

The Ambiance: Create a concept or theme. Nothing is to be left to chance. From the theme, determine what hors d' oeuvres, food and drinks are to be served. The evening's experience begins when your guests walk into your domain and your staff meets them. The whole experience should not appear contrived nor too studied. It must echo the personality of the hostess. The effect should be interesting and all the details must flow together harmoniously.

The Staff: Good relations with and amongst your household staff is a must to deliver a fabulous and incident free evening. Reassure, praise and thank the help and kitchen staff for their efforts. Remember, should incidents occur that need immediate decisions, an efficient staff can think for you.

The Table: Painstakingly choose linens and accessories for the setting. Use unscented candles on the table so that it does not conflict with delicious aromas and flavors of the food. Your table is the stage. The food, flowers and accessories are the main players.

The Specialists: If you are hiring specialists to assist you for a special evening, meet with them before the event itself (the food caterer, flower shop supplier, wine connoisseur). Brainstorming is a must for this allows for a fluid and unified presentation. I like working with the experts, like Antonio (of Mabolo) and Margarita Fores, because they put so much effort into executing what I want. Nothing is ever too difficult for them.

The Guests : I believe in having all the appointments and accoutrements at hand for my guests. It is very important to make each and every individual feel welcome. Put him at ease and make it a point to sit, chat and exchange niceties with him.

Send each one home with an enchanting memory that will make them want to recreate it in their own home. As each one leaves with a small token from the hostess, the most exquisite compliment is when each guest wants to know when the next dinner at your home is!

SAM Eduque, Josine Elizalde and Margarita Fores

AN EXOTIC and elegant setting for dinner with a BenCab portrait as a focal point

The Emphasis is on Breathing Space . . .

WHEN the pressures of shopping lists and writing cards and last-minute appointments get to you, where do you turn to and who do you turn to?

In search of some breathing space, Élan found the answer in Emphasis.

An oasis in the heart of the Rockwell Development in Makati, Emphasis has provided countless men and women with a "bolt hole" and breathing space from the rigors of daily schedules. Individual rooms with very Balinese décor and a staff trained to respect the private space of each customer, are heaven sent pleasures to the weary, the stressed, the sick at heart. If one would like to pamper oneself at night, after the office has closed, all you need to do is call them and they will adjust to your schedule. Élan asked **Teng Roma** of Emphasis on his secret tips for the holidays.

Teng Roma on Beauty From Within—

The Hair: Make sure to get your regular treatment and aromatherapy.

There is a selection of natural ingredients for dry, and damaged hair, hair loss and dandruff. Consult with your hair specialist. Get a new style and change that look for the holidays.

The Face: Have a facial once or twice a month to help remove visible signs of stress and fatigue.

Apply moisturizer every night and sunblock every morning before applying make-up.

When you are in a rush, simply apply a bit of color to the face (blush on the cheeks and a light lip gloss).

The Nails: Get your nails trimmed regularly and make the time for a weekly hand and foot spa. The first signs of aging begin to show in our hands. Give it good care with a regular moisturizer.

Your Diet: Drink plenty of water. A glass of orange juice when you are tired, gives you a boost of Vitamin C.

Have a fiber packed breakfast every morning. Try oatmeal with cinnamon and brown sugar.

Exercise: Get some sleep—your joy depends on it.

Regular body massages will remove the tension knots from your muscles and will recharge you.

TENG Roma applies the finishing touches to a satisfied client.

Criselda Lontok: Stepping Out In Style

IT WAS a wonderful get-together of friends at lunch a few weeks ago, when Criselda introduced her new line of fashionable footwear.

Just in time for the Christmas Season, a selection of mules and slides in elegant black, burgundy and gold were launched, to the delight of Manila's fashionable women.

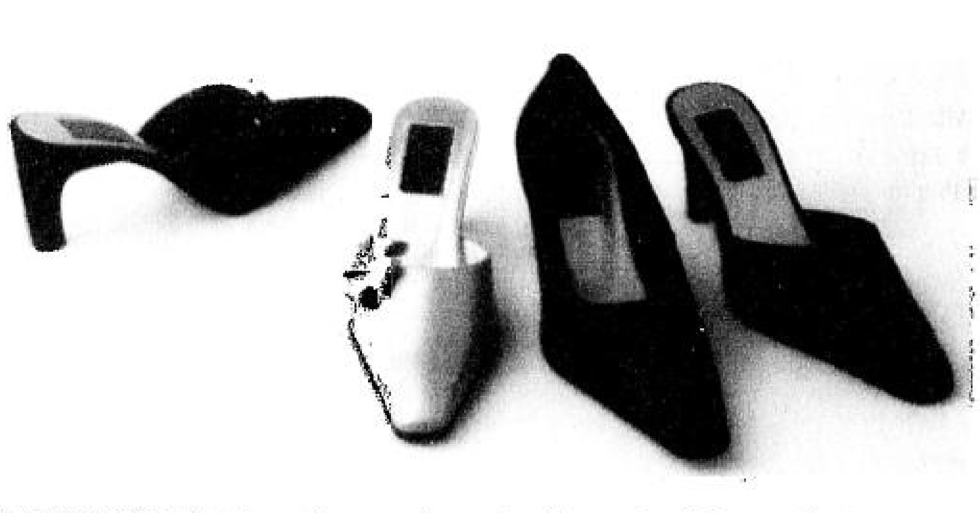
Easy to wear, comfortable and classic, these are ideal choices for a season of low-key dinners and parties.

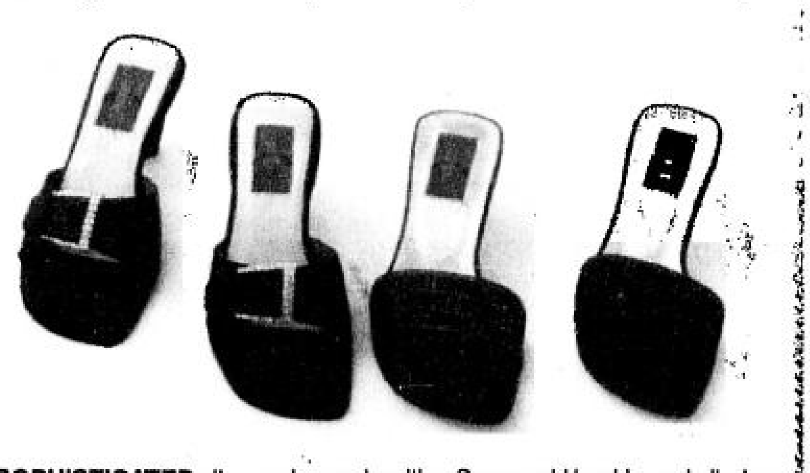
WITH Stuart Weitzman at the Mopel-Mican Shoes and Bags Fair at Milano

WITH Sandro Magli of Di Sanfro and wife Emmanuela

SEATED from left Josie Lichauco, Mary Prieto, Menchu Concepcion. Standing are Marilou Pineda, Carol Masibay, Criselda and Brenda Reyes

CRISELDA and Conchitina Bernardo showing off a lamé mule


STUNNING black mules and pumps in suede with accents of Swarovski rhinestones and leather trim


SOPHISTICATED slip-ons in suede with a Swarovski buckle and alluring slip-ons with rhinestones artfully placed in a geometric pattern

An Abundance Of Joy

"WOMEN who have an abundance of joy are those who make a priority of finding pockets of it within their own lives." This story is about three unique women who at some point in their very busy existence asked themselves some life defining questions. What is important to you? Are you having your best life? How much further can you grow? What in your life brings you joy?

Their answers were not to be found in the everyday whirl of social activity, nor the exclusivity of their homes and secure lifestyles. Rather, they came face to face with joy in the simplicity and stark need of the children at the Bantay Bata 163 Home.

Bambina...There is joy in giving

When **Bambina de Leon Buenaventura** retired from the telecommunications industry three years ago, she found the need to do something fulfilling especially after her two sons started to get busy with their own lives.

"I used to play golf until I hurt my back," relates **Bambina** in between calls to prospective donors at the Bantay Bata 163 Childrens Home in Quezon City. "Then, early this year, my friend **Elvira (Yulo)** invited me to sit in during a forum on foster care. They were discussing ways to attract foster parents and generate more funding."

Before she knew it, Bambina became involved in the foster home, as the Volunteer Program Coordinator responsible for the monthly foster care forum.

The former Maryknoll/Assumption graduate and wife to businessman **Cesar Buenaventura**, has observed that foster parenting still has a long way to go in the Philippines. "We would rather do more for children of our relatives. What we do in Bantay Bata is to encourage foster care with non-relatives. We want these children to be cared for on a temporary basis, while waiting for them to be adopted."

When television plugs started to come out advocating foster care, **Bambina** realized the far-reaching effect of the commercial. Inquiries were received and she now had to make sure those who received the calls were well-trained to answer. (She is currently setting up her own training academy for call centers.) **Bambina** also had to make calls to her corporate friends for donations of milk, baby powder, toothpaste and others.

The joy she has experienced has become immeasurable. A joy she has shared with her son on vacation from the US who also would brings his gangmates to be with the children.

"Joy is really sharing, giving of yourself. You've been the recipient. Now its time to be the one to give to people who don't even expect anything. Little things mean so much to them (children). They are so appreciative. This is an experience you don't get when you are dealing with the corporate world. You feel more complete in life. There is truth to the saying that there is joy in giving."

Elvira...My faith in people is restored

It took **Gina Lopez**, managing director of ABS-CBN foundation three long calls to **Elvira L. Yulo**, to convince her to take on the daunting task of generating funds for Bantay Bata through the coinbank campaign.

After graduating from college and getting married, Elvira had focused on her family of four children, tutoring them and guiding them through their many activities as they were growing up.

When **Gina**'s call came **Elvira** was at a crossroad in her life, where loss was the emotion of the day. A strong resolve to move forward made the commitment a logical decision.

Today, the Bantay Bata 163 coinbanks are seen in most banks, malls, store chains and gas stations, due to the unrelenting efforts of **Elvira** and her team (**Irene, Cynthia** and **Mike**). "Right now, we are in Metro Manila," explains the enthusiastic and hardworking mother of four. "Although, we have reached as far as La Union, we are exploring the possibility of expanding to Davao and Iloilo where there are Bantay Bata 163 homes."

"For me, its meeting people from all walks of life,that gives me so much fulfillment. My faith in people is restored every time I witness their generosity of spirit especially in these difficult times. Individuals from depressed areas come up to me and ask how they can help with their meager earnings. There are hundreds out there who do not care to be publicly acknowledged (like the OFWs). It is enough that they are able to contribute to the children."

"People think that I am doing Bantay Bata 163 a favor. On the contrary, I enjoy what I am doing," she enthuses, "Bantay Bata 163 is God's gift to me. This is my joy."

Otta...I wanted to make a difference

More than three years ago, **Otta Uy-Montinola** discovered that after having been a successful businesswoman, she wanted to do something more. "My life was moving forward and I wasn't doing anything to make a difference." As a classmate and close friend of **Gina Lopez** at Assumption, it was inevitable that she would get acquainted with Bantay Bata and Bantay Kalikasan.

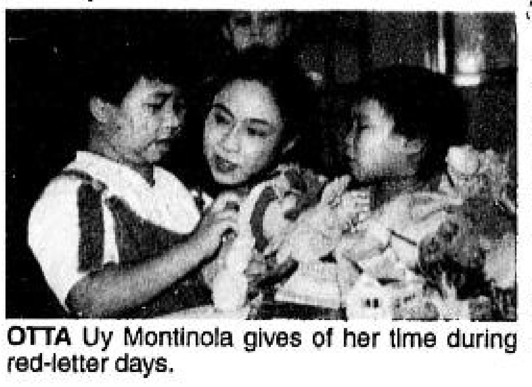
"I cannot remember when I first heard of Bantay Bata 163," says **Otta**. "Seems like it was always there. I love children. It is refreshing to be with their innocence and purity of heart,especially during these very troubled times. Having no children of my own, I found myself involved with the Children's Home."

Although she feels she is still not as active with Bantay Bata as many people perceive her to be, **Otta** admits "I do whatever I can in my own little corner. I liase potential donors and volunteers with the Home. I visit the Children's Home whenever I can and whenever I need to uplift my spirit. I like to do this mostly on special occasions like Valentine's, Christmas and my birthday. I try to collect donations for the Home on a small scale, either in cash or in kind. One way is, whenever I celebrate my birthday with a party, I request for cash donations in lieu of gifts.

Last birthday, I was able to raise P80,000 from generous friends. Sometimes I think I am doing this more for myself than the children. It is I who feel fulfilled and gratified!

It fills me with joy to see how little it takes to make a child happy. Just show them you love them, show them you care...and the smile on their faces will tell you that you have already brought them happiness."

At every moment in our life, we have the freedom to choose joy. It is in the choice that we discover who we are. In the case of **Bambina, Elvira** and **Otta** the discovery has set them free.



OTTA Uy Montinola gives of her time during red-letter days.

ABS-CBN
BANTAY BATA 163

ELVIRA Liboro Yulo pushes an awareness of the plight of the children through the coin banks.

BAMBINA de Leon Buenaventura working with the children at the Bantay Bata home.

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0% INTEREST ON INSTALLMENT FOR SELECTED APPLIANCES!
EVERYTHING PAYABLE IN INSTALLMENT AT ONLY 1.5% INTEREST PER MONTH!
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SHOPPING CITY

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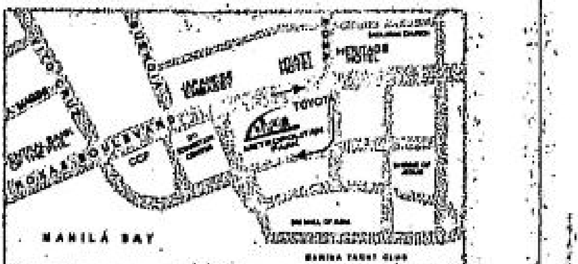

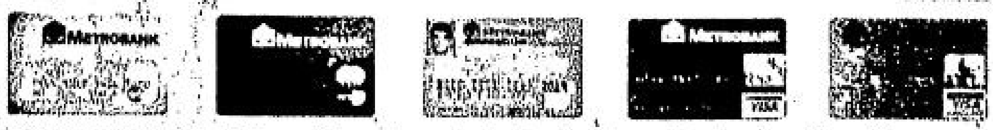

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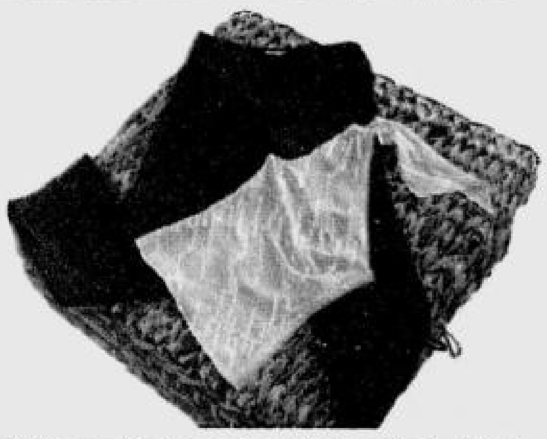
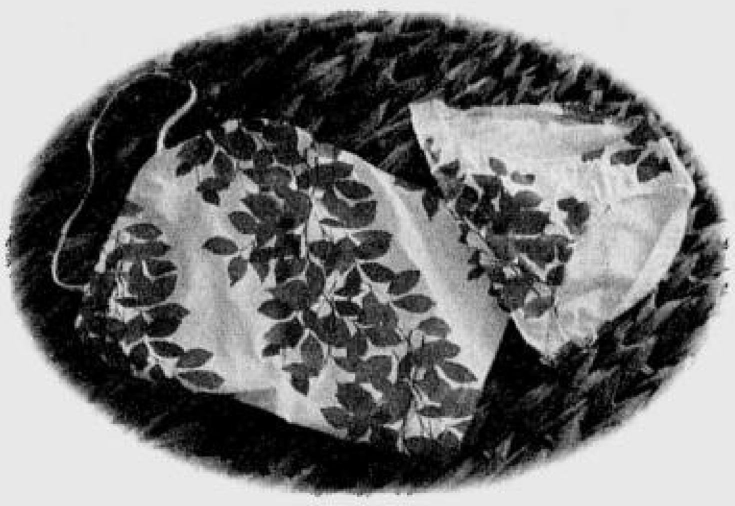
THE COUNTDOWN to D-day is most definitely in the final stretch!

If you have not yet purchased that special present for the most important person in your life, let Élan walk you through some fabulous last minute Christmas gift suggestions

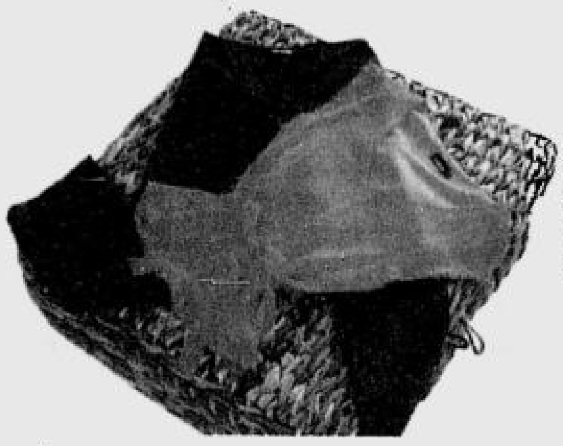
SEDUCTIVE PARTY GEAR



HUSSY gray sequined one-shoulder top with black Rebecca Davies canvass pants. Perfect for a New Year's celebration out on the town. From Itsie-Bitsie Boutique, #5228592.



ZIMMERMAN pink leaves drape tube and flexi pants



ZIMMERMAN red v-belted chiffon top with black Rebecca Davies canvass pants

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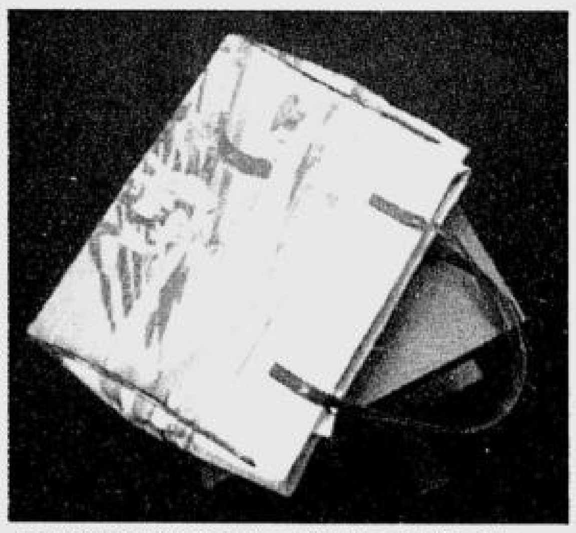


THE "JETSET RIO" Anya Hindmarch Tote. The much coveted designs marry fun and whimsical styling with function.

ELUSIVE, elegant and tantalizing fragrances from Creed.

PLAYFUL Custo Barcelona shirt with a graffiti skirt

PHOTOS BY MIKE ALQUINTO

High-powered rendezvous

THE NEW BMW 3 Series Convertible and Z3 Series Roadster

For all those gentlemen (and ladies too!) with a little money to spend this Christmas, why not treat yourself to the unique joy of driving with flair and style? How about a convertible? Or perhaps a sports car? If that sounds appealing (hmm...) then know that flair and style, combined with practicality and safety are what two of BMW's newest models are all about.

There has always been something magical about a convertible, and the new BMW 325Ci is no exception. The classical, elegant styling of this model makes an immediate impression and the neat waistline and powerful rear end add sporting appeal to its refined looks without compromising day-to day practicality.

325 Convertible

Now available in the Philippines, the convertible is the open-air companion to the recently introduced 325i sedan, touring and coupe. The vehicle interior combines elegance and ergonomics into a harmonious whole. The driver-friendly cockpit is fitted with a multi-function steering wheel that puts controls within easy reach, and the driver's seat comes with electric adjustment as standard and automatically moves forward to allow passengers easy access to the rear seats. Safety has been enhanced in the convertible as well, and BMW's turbine-smooth 2.5-liter inline 6-cylinder engine delivers a cool 193 horsepower.

Z3 Roadster

With the introduction of the convertible to the local market, BMW adds another variant to its expanding product range in the Philippines. It has all the basic ingredients to provide an exhilarating driving experience. And, it is a car for connoisseurs with highly individual lifestyles: sporty, open-minded, dynamic and aesthetic.

Which is also certainly the case for the Z3, the taut little roadster that could be said to have launched a revival of the traditional sports car when it was introduced in 1996. Since the Z3's debut, BMW has developed it into an entire Series, moving from the initial 4-cylinder roadster to a line of six-cylinder roadsters and a unique coupe. Along the way, Z3 design and technology have been updated and features have been enhanced and expanded.

In this latest model, new engines, a new and sportier transmission, and further equipment upgrades have been introduced.

There is still more power (170hp), special alloy wheels and sports seats, together with classic leather, anti-lock braking system, front and side airbag for driver and front passenger, central locking system, front headrests and third brakelights. Both manual and automatic transmission (five-speed) are available.

Who could fail to be convinced? Surely the only problem would be to choose between the two...

Spreading Joy...With Wine

BY ALEXANDER LICHAYTOO
Bacchus International Inc.

WE often hear about the many different ways one can benefit from and enjoy wine. For one, wine has numerous health benefits and is generally known to be good for the heart. Second, certain individuals enjoy the cultural or historical facets of wine as they get to know the different vineyards and people that produce this wonderful and most profound of all beverages. I have personally also handled certain transactions in futures trading of wines yet to be released several years later, making them the most liquid of investments—literally! And of course, the most obvious reason to drink wine is that one can really enjoy and match it with food from any corner of the globe. There's a saying that goes, "A meal without wine is like a day without sunshine." And when one gets used to combining the proper wines with their favorite foods, it can make you smile from ear to ear with a kind of silliness much like a child having an ice cream sundae for the very first time.

I myself have long enjoyed the virtues of a good bottle of wine and have enjoyed it under both happy and sad conditions. However, what has never failed to amaze me is one simple fact—I have rarely (if ever) enjoyed a bottle of wine alone. You see—the reason here is that once uncorked, we have to consume the bottle at that moment or in a few hours (whether refrigerated or not). After this period, the wine starts oxidizing and goes sour. I am sure several of you out there have gone to a restaurant and ordered a glass of house wine only to find out that you were drinking something that tasted more like vinegar rather than wine. You may have been drinking yesterday's bottle.

Wine is meant to be shared! It is the only alcoholic beverage that we can share with our loved ones, barkadas, business associates, grandparents and even with our teenage kids. With Christmas around the corner and all of us thinking of what to do for that special friend or loved one—why not go out and invite him or her to your favorite eating place or even just to your house, and pick-up a nice bottle of wine to share. After the bottle is long gone and consumed, the special memories created from that moment will be with you for a long, long time...

Have a Merry Christmas and be safe.

A MEAL without wine is like a day without sunshine.

A Diplomat's Tale...

THE TIES between the Philippines with Spain and the United States have always been of significant importance, in keeping with the role these two countries have played in our history. Our identity as Filipinos is in very large part a product of the historic influence of these countries—once masters, now friends and partners.

It has been a busy month for the newly confirmed ambassadors entrusted with fostering these two important bilateral ties.

At a recent gathering of friends from diplomatic circles, Ambassador Joseph Delano Bernardo was feted to mark his recent confirmation as the Philippines' new envoy to Spain. As we bid farewell to Lani and his gracious wife Conchitina, we are confident that they will be impeccable representatives of our country.

In Washington, the Philippine Ambassador to the United States Albert del Rosario presented his credentials to US President George Bush at the Oval Office.

The close relationship between our two governments necessitates smooth collaboration between our ambassador and his counterparts in Washington. Ambassador del Rosario is an excellent choice and we wish him all the best.

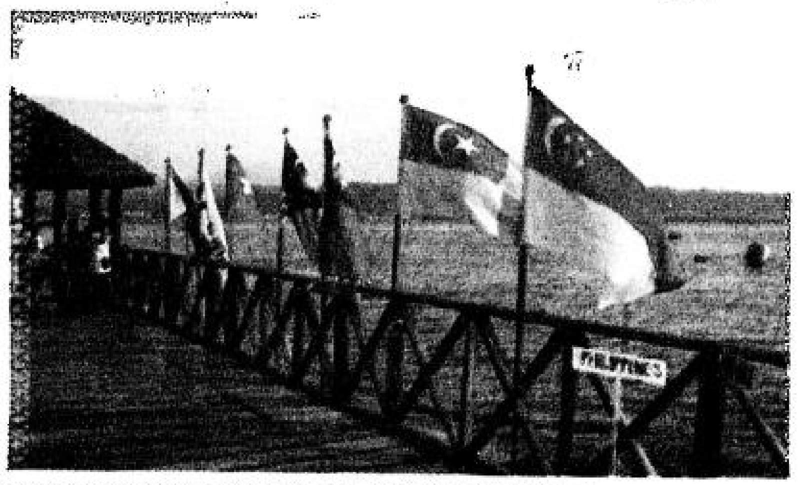
FROM left are Fausto Preysler of Costa Rica, Ambassador Lani Bernardo-Ambassador to Spain, Consul Jose Rodriguez of Bolivia, Consul Rico Tantoco of Morocco and Consul Tony Rufino of Mongolia

FROM left are Lulu Rodriguez, Consul Evie Costa of Togo, Consul Fortune Aleta Ledesma of Monaco, Maricris Olbes, Bonnette Reyes, Conchitina Bernardo, Ane Preysler, Mita Rufino and Nena Tantoco

PHILIPPINE Ambassador to the United States Albert del Rosario presents his credentials to US President George Bush.

AMBASSADOR and Mrs. Albert del Rosario with US President George Bush.

Asean Kids Discover The Joy Of Sailing



PARTICIPANTS' national flags unfurl to a favorable breeze

THE 14TH Asean Optimist Championship was recently held at the Waterfront Beach, Subic Bay, Philippines. The annual event ran sailing races using the globally popular Optimist dinghy from Nov. 18 to 24 for kids 15 years old and younger. The wind conditions were on the medium to heavy with gusts of up to 25 knots or 50 kph, which was quite a handful for many kids on the racecourse. The children found their way by picking favorable wind shifts and wind strengths depending on their strategy and tactical position. No doubt a tall order even for adults!

Young sailors from Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore, Malaysia-Selangor, Hong Kong and the Philippines went head to head in exciting races for five days. The Fleet Racing saw 34 boats complete 12 races. There was no question that Singapore was a well-coached team. At the end of the Fleet Racing format, four of their five boats were in the top 10. To drive that point further, it was Singaporean **Teo Wee Chin** who dominated their fleet for the 12 races, finishing consistently in every race and doing no worse than 12th place throughout the regatta. There was no doubt that **Wee Chin** deserved his gold medal.

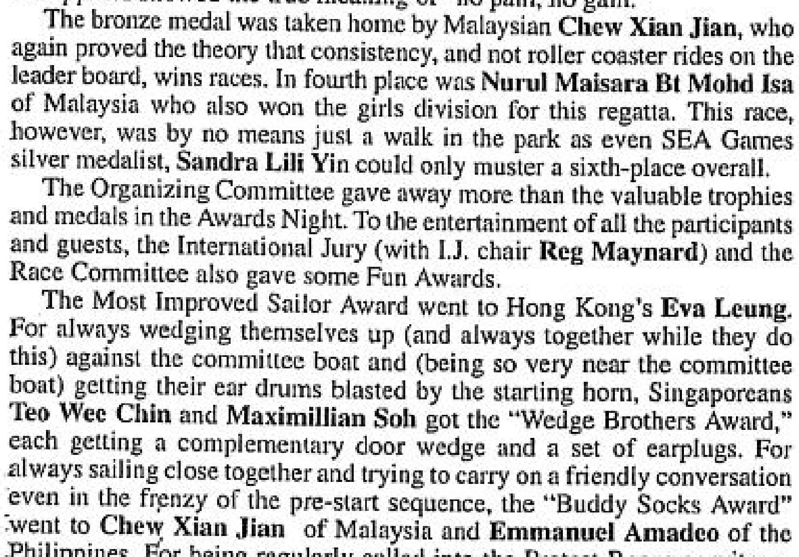
A pleasant surprise for the Philippines was the silver medal of **Emerson Villena**. His sterling performance throughout the five days obviously wasn't hampered even by his two impacted teeth, in sailing lingo, on both port (left side) and starboard (right side). **Emerson Villena** of the Philippines showed the true meaning of "no pain, no gain."

The bronze medal was taken home by Malaysian **Chew Xian Jian**, who again proved the theory that consistency, and not roller coaster rides on the leader board, wins races. In fourth place was **Nurul Maisara Bt Mohd Isa** of Malaysia who also won the girls division for this regatta. This race, however, was by no means just a walk in the park as even SEA Games silver medalist, **Sandra Lili Yin** could only muster a sixth-place overall.

The Organizing Committee gave away more than the valuable trophies and medals in the Awards Night. To the entertainment of all the participants and guests, the International Jury (with I.J. chair **Reg Maynard**) and the Race Committee also gave some Fun Awards.

The Most Improved Sailor Award went to Hong Kong's **Eva Leung**. For always wedging themselves up (and always together while they do this) against the committee boat and (being so very near the committee boat) getting their ear drums blasted by the starting horn, Singaporeans **Teo Wee Chin** and **Maximillian Soh** got the "Wedge Brothers Award," each getting a complementary door wedge and a set of earplugs. For always sailing close together and trying to carry on a friendly conversation even in the frenzy of the pre-start sequence, the "Buddy Socks Award" went to **Chew Xian Jian** of Malaysia and **Emmanuel Amadeo** of the Philippines. For being regularly called into the Protest Room as witness for many of Protest Hearings throughout the regatta, **Nurul Maisara Bt Mohd Isa** got the "Star Witness Award."

The speeches were kept short and light-hearted that evening. The kids from each country took turns to put on skits, songs and dances, that drew much laughter and applause, and made the evening a success.



REGATTA de blanc: Optimist dinghies poised for action

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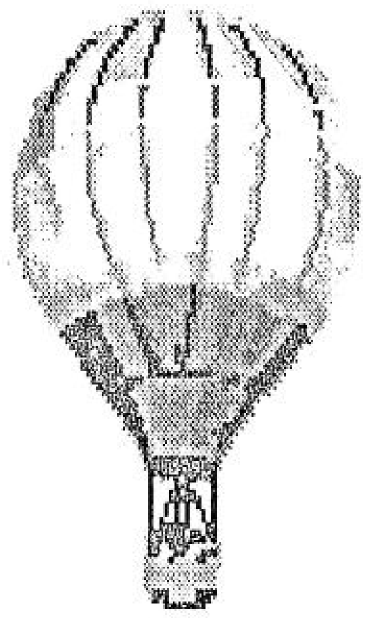

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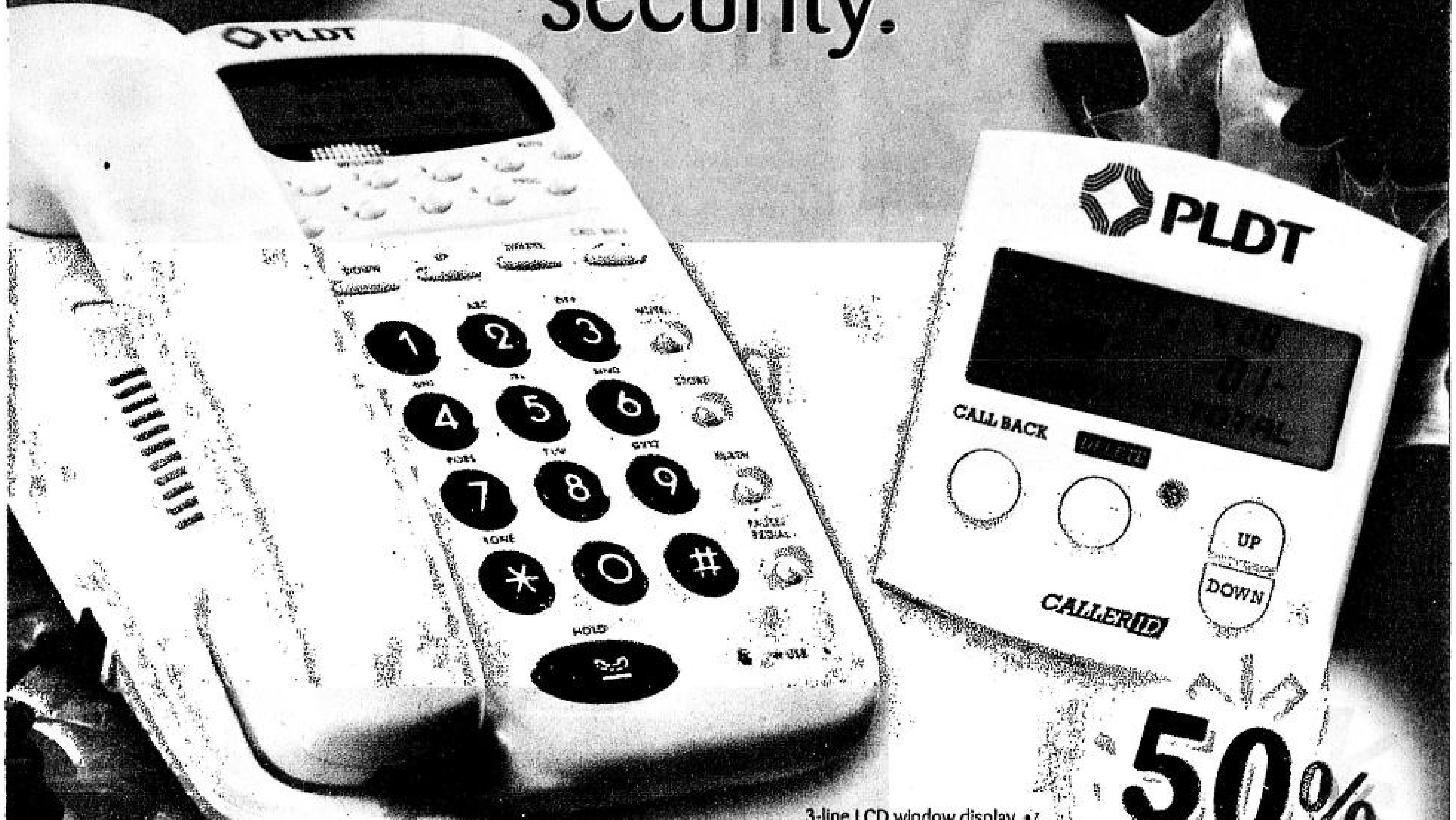

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Treat of the Week

SATURDAY,
DECEMBER 15, 2001
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
D1
Saturday SPECIAL
NESTOR U. TORRE, Editor ▪ EDMUND L. SICAM, Associate Editor

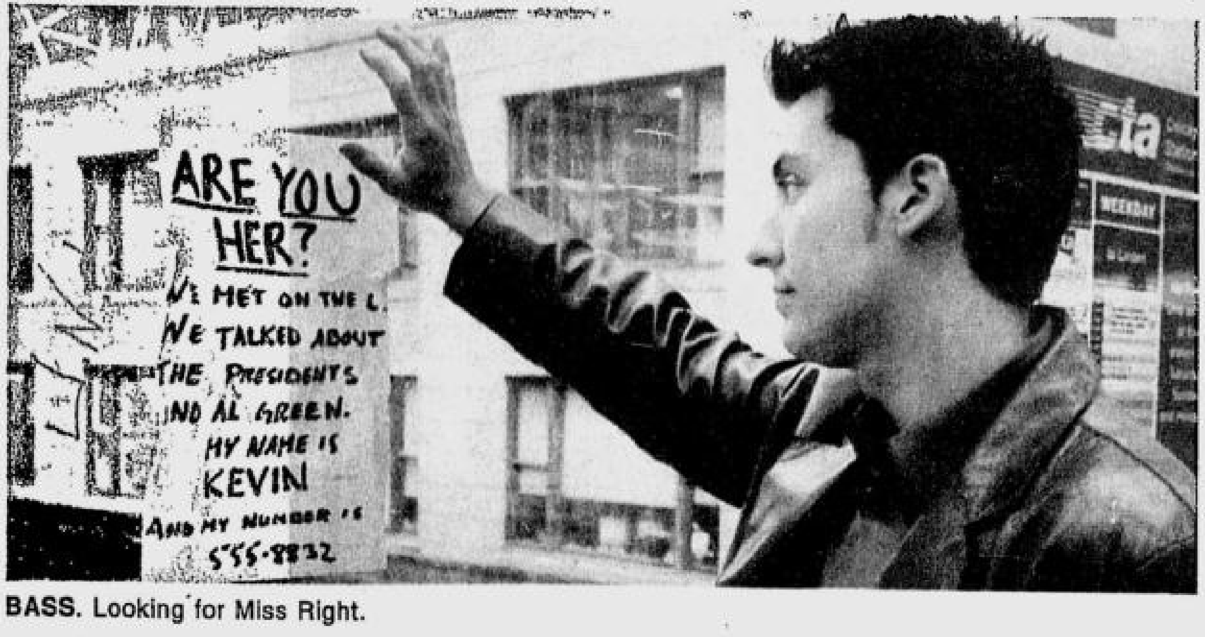
Double Orange Delight

1-1/2	cups NESTLÉ CREAM
3	tbsps. orange juice concentrate
2	large oranges, peeled & sectioned
3	tbsps. semi-sweet chocolate chips
2	tsps. butter

Combine cream and orange juice in a bowl. Divide into 4 serving plates. Arrange orange sections on top. Combine chocolate chips and butter. Melt over low heat. Drizzle over oranges and serve. Serves: 4

Watch out for next week's fruity treat!

GQ, James Bulliard, Lance Bass and Joey Fatone are friends in the romantic comedy.


ARE YOU HER?
WE MET ON THE L.
WE TALKED ABOUT THE PRESIDENTS AND AL GREEN.
MY NAME IS KEVIN
AND MY NUMBER IS 555-8832

BASS. Looking for Miss Right.

Lance Bass of 'N Sync makes his film debut

LANCE Bass and Joey Fatone of pop music phenomenon 'N Sync make their film debut in the whimsical romantic comedy "On the Line," produced by Peter Abrams of Tapestry Films, which came up with the recent hit "Serendipity," and A Happy Place Productions where Lance Bass is a partner.

Predicament

According to Peter Abrams, "On The Line" is a funny story about the predicament of finding love in a big city. Match that with the music and spirited personalities of Lance Bass and Joey Fatone and you've got something really different: a fun new spin on the musical, romantic pop movie.

> 'I really related to Kevin because he's such a romantic guy and he really believes in love'

The story begins when Kevin, a young Chicago-an played by Lance Bass, thinks he has finally met the girl of his dreams on the L-train. It literally becomes a bad case of love at first (and almost only) sight because, dumbfounded and too embarrassed to ask her name and much more her number, all Kevin is left with after the meeting is a picture in his mind.

However, one sighting is enough to convince him that "she is the one." So with the help of buddies, he sets out on an ambitious and nearly calamitous cross-city chase to find the girl.

When Lance Bass read the script, he was enchanted with the story and with the character of Kevin. He recalls, "I really related to Kevin because he's such a romantic guy and he really believes in love. But the really cool thing to me is that, this isn't just a love story—it's also really funny, and the situation Kevin finds himself in, attracting every girl in the city except the one he most wants, is filled with the potential for hilarious comedy."

Nice change

On taking the role, Bass comments, "Acting is a nice change from music because it is a lot more detailed. He stresses, "In music, you get up on the stage and everything's about being as big as you can, because people aren't going to notice every little thing. But with acting, the camera picks up every little move and look so it's much more emotionally intense.

Joey Fatone plays Rod, Kevin's best friend and former band mate in a high school garage group called Granite. Rod's character is a hardcore rock n' roller whose attitudes and musical tastes are comically stuck in the '80s. Fatone is pleased with Rod's character saying it offered him a chance to do something different musically.

With regards to acting with his 'N Sync band mate Lance Bass, Fatone says it presented a challenge because they knew each other pretty well and in the movie, they had to see each other as the characters of Kevin and Rod.

Bass and Fatone are supported by a diverse ensemble cast that includes Emmanuelle Chriqui as Abbey, the mysterious girl on the train, GQ, James Bulliard, Dave Foley, Jerry Stiller, Tamala Jones, Richie Sambora and Reverend Al Green, who plays himself.

"Tayo na giliw
magsalo na tayo,
meron na tayong
tinapay at pesto."

Christmas carols at Greenbelt 1 Café Row.

From December 14 to 23, the true nature of the season comes alive with holiday hymns sung by the heavenly voices of:
Augustinian Larks (Dec. 14) + Sto. Domingo Male Choir (Dec. 15) + Miriam Liturgical Choir (Dec. 16) + U.P. Concert Chorus (Dec. 17) + CSA Choir (Dec. 18) + DLSU Choir (Dec. 19) + San Beda College Glee Club (Dec. 20) + Kilyawan Boy's Choir (Dec. 21) + Ateneo Glee Club (Dec. 22) + Tiples de Sto. Domingo (Dec. 23)

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World-Class Bartending Pinay Style at Beefeater International Bartenders Competition in Denmark

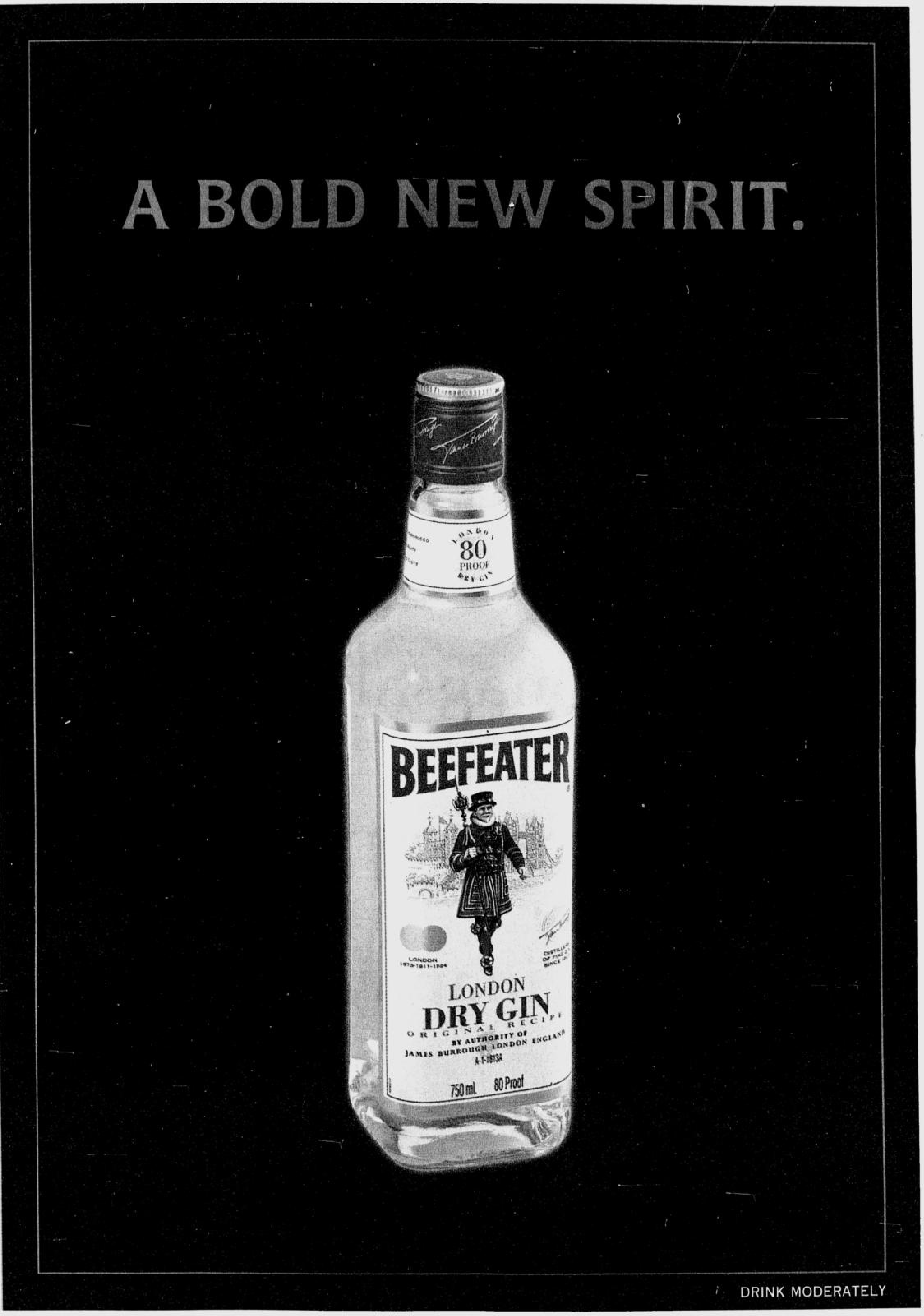
The Philippines' first Beefeater Ambassador, Regina Mercado may not have brought home the 5th Beefeater International Bartenders Competition (BIBC) 2001 trophy but did create quite a stir with her "18th Green" and "Earl's Delight" cocktail mix and feminine flare in the creative concoction and freestyle events of the premiere tilt. The only woman among male contenders, Mercado impressed the international press and Filipino community in attendance at the Kunstforeningen Museum and Base Camp bar where the four-category bartending competition was held.

Despite a raging fever, Mercado held her own among other champions which included Bulgaria's Loubomir Dechkov Jordanov; China's Ahi An Ou Yang; Czech Republic's Pavel Sima; Denmark's Robert Gromit Spragg; Estonia's Sven Petrov; Finland's Jan Lingren; Iceland's David Kristensson; Korea's Jeonh-Kyon Im; Latvia's Adrejs Senins; Norway's Patrick Eriksson: Russia's Bogdan Petrov; and the United Kingdom's Jamie Stephenson.

The BIBC is considered to be the ultimate test of a bartender's skills and has gathered together a stellar line-up of the world's best mixers and flaretenders since the competition was launched in 1997. In Mercado's case, the opportunity to mix and exchange bar notes came when she bested over 60 bartenders at the home front. Mercado hurdled a basic bartending knowledge exam; speed mixing; creative concoction; and freestyle or flaretending categories. To prepare for the Denmark tilt, Mercado had a week of practice on her bottle-juggling act and freshened up on her cocktail mixing from memory. Colleagues from National Sports Grill and other bartending experts pitched in to help her polish her skill level. Mercado also studied previous BIBC competition footage to pick up some insights and winning moves on flare trends and mix techniques. At the Denmark tilt, Mercado had to go through all four categories yet again as the Philippines' bet among the final 13 international competitors. This time, the judges' panel was led by Worldwide Master Distiller for Beefeater, Mr. Desmond Payne. He holds the enviable job of supervising all aspects of creating the world's best-tasting gin at Beefeater's Kennington distillery and at the heat of the competition, zealously taste-tested every Beefeater cocktail entry to make sure that the spirit of the mix is flavorfully upheld. Beautiful Kunstforeningen, an old house built in 1750 turned exhibition hall/museum which showed Danish, and international modern and contemporary art, was the site of the written exam and creative concoction bouts. After the pensive and "creative" air of Kunstforeningen, the competition picked up with a change of scenery. Aptly, the bartending war was waged at Base Camp, a former Naval base converted into a disco club in Copenhagen. While Norway's Patrick Eriksson (who emerged as BIBC 2001 overall champion) won the speed mixing category and China's Ahi An Ou Yang's flare earned him the freestyle win, Mercado was noted for her perfect cross-pour.

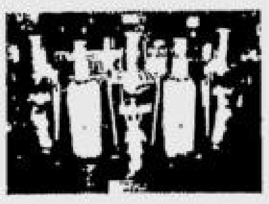
The flare technique called for some arm twisting and accurate pouring at the end of all the jugglery. Mercado was the only one to perform the cross-pour. That's no mean feat, considering that most bartenders abroad had the option to learn from proper bartending schools. Locally, bartending 'know-how' is limited to "workshops" or "in-house" training and "peer help"– which basically meant helpful pointers given by one bartender to another.

As for Mercado, the chance to represent the country at the BIBC tilt is honor enough. In addition, her original cocktail dubbed the 18th Green made it to the exclusive Beefeater cocktail list. As such, the recipe for 18th Green remains Mercado's – and Beefeater's own. While the rest of us didn't witness the event, Mercado's intriguing drink can still be enjoyed here. Mercado herself will be mixing the drink for National Sports Grill – done the way only a world-class bartender and Beefeater Ambassador could.



National Sports Grill, Makati's Regina Mercado proved she's queen of the bar at the recently concluded 1st Beefeater International Bartenders Competition (BIBC). Mercado had the fastest time in building a Beefeater Pomelo Gimlet at 34 seconds.

The final 12 bartenders from Cebu, Davao, Baguio and Manila pose for posterity at the culmination of the 1st Beefeater International Bartenders Competition (BIBC) held at host venue National Sports Grill, Makati.



Beefeater plaques and trophies given to the winners.

‘The Weakest Link’ back from TV limbo

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

AFTER a week in TV limbo, “The Weakest Link” returned to the tube last Monday night, and its fans in our home were delighted, Still, we wondered why the show’s producers never even bothered to explain to viewers the circumstances behind its departure, and now its return.

Just as there should be transparency in government, there should also be transparency in the way that TV people relate to viewers, don’t you think? After all, they have a right to know the real score about important matters related to the shows they have learned to like.

Anyway, the show’s regular viewers (and we are legion) welcome back the program’s “impossible-to-please” host, Edu Manzano, who last Monday dished out a fresh batch of “enjoyable” insults that the contestants took with a grin and a wince, to wit:

“Your score is shockingly low! *Gusto kong isipin na ninenerbiyos lang kayo, kaya lang*— when will it end? *Sino ang mahina sa inyo? Kanino ayaw sabihin ng mga manghuhula ang kanyang kapalaran? Sino ang* rookie *na sanay makatanggap ng* failing mark *sa kanyang* report card?

“Your performance tonight is like a multiple car accident. Mass murder *ang nangyari! Sino’ng mawawalan ng* girlfriend *pagkatapos ng gabing ito? Sinong tatanggap ng regalong walang laman*?

“May virus *sa samahan ninyo! Kaninong isda an hindi nabenta sa palengke? Kaninong guro ang kasalukuyang nage-empake at naghahanap ng bagong trabaho*?!

“You have a criminal in your midst! A crime has been committed! Seek out the culprit!!!”

Properly hectored at and “terrified,” the evening’s contestants started to make mistakes in this (hopefully bemusing) wise:

Edu: Where do the Nipponese live?
Contestants: Nepal!
(Japan is the right answer, of course.)

* * *

Edu: Who wrote “Trip to Quiapo?”
Contestant: Nick Joaquin!
(Ricky Lee)

* * *

Edu: Where can gallstones be found?
Contestant: In the kidney!
(The gall bladder!)

* * *

Edu: *Sino ang ina ni* Toni Rose Gayda?
Contestant: Bank!
(Answer Rosa Rosal first, *then* you can bank.)

* * *

Edu: *Sa baseball, sino ang kumukuha ng* strikes—batter o umpire?
Contestant: Umpire!
(*Isa ka pa!*)

‘A Concert for New York City’

Channel [V] Int’l presents a TV tribute to benefit the victims of the World Trade Center tragedy—“A Concert for New York City” at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 23.

The concert for a cause was held at Madison Square Garden last October. Over 5,000 firefighters, policemen and other emergency workers involved in the rescue operations were treated to memorable performances by artists like Paul McCartney, The Who, Bon Jovi, U2, David Bowie, Elton John, Destiny’s Child, Janet Jackson, Backstreet Boys, Mick Jagger, Eric Clapton, Billy Joel and Jay-Z. The show ended with a poignant rendition of the Beatles’ “Let It Be.”

Feedback

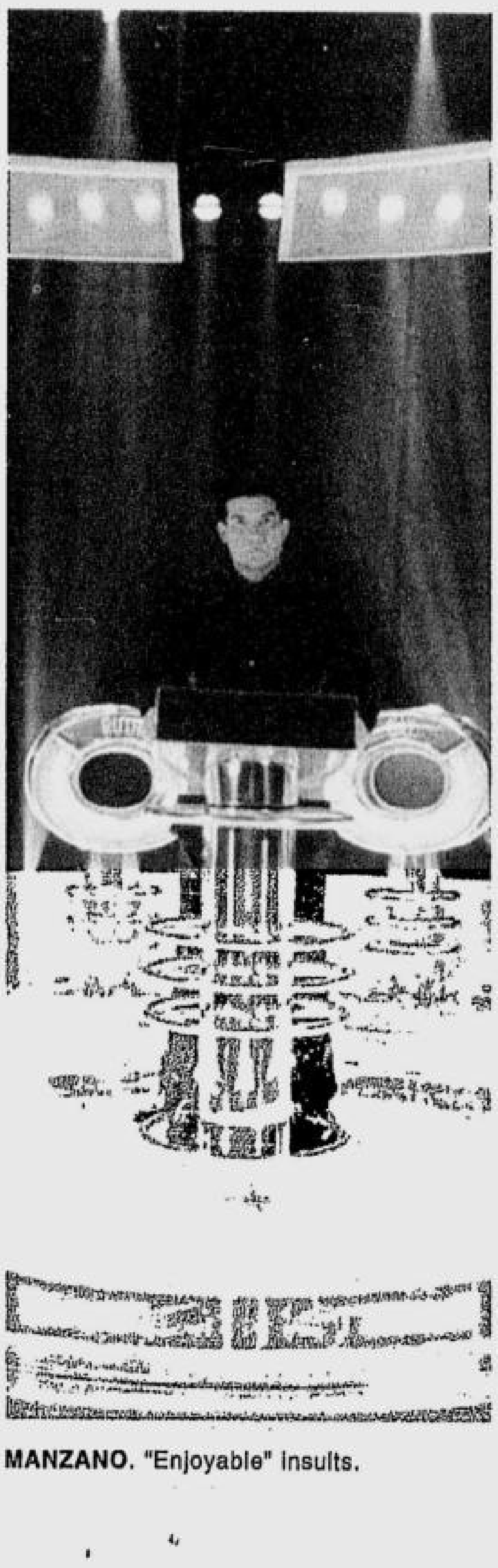
From Mary Rose Servando of Makati City: “At first glance, the popularity of quiz shows on television is a welcome development. At least, it’s no longer sudsy soap operas or violent crime stories that are filling the screen. For a change, it’s people who know things who are being put in the spotlight.

“But there are simply too many shows of this kind on the TV screen now. The result is, we are being smothered in so many facts and rote knowledge. This could delude us into thinking that we are becoming more intelligent in the process, but this is not really the case. It’s one thing to have a retentive memory and quite another to be able to think and analyze…”

‘Pasko’

An inspiring night of music unfolds today at 7 p.m. at the Minor Basilica of San Loranzo Ruiz in the Christmas concert, “Pasko! Pagkakaisa, Pag-asa ng Pamilya at Kapayapaan para sa Buong Mundo!”

The Manila Symphony Orchestra will accompany Dulce, Ivy Violan, Lindsay Custodio, Robert Seña, Rannie Raymundo, Adrian Panganiban and Mr. Emy Munji. They will be joined by the Up Singing Ambassadors, UST Singers and the Binondo Grand Choir. Adrian Panganiban directs, and Noel Espenida is the musical director. Free admission.



MANZANO. "Enjoyable" insults.

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SEÑA. Singing with Dulce and Ivy Violan in Christmas concert tonight.

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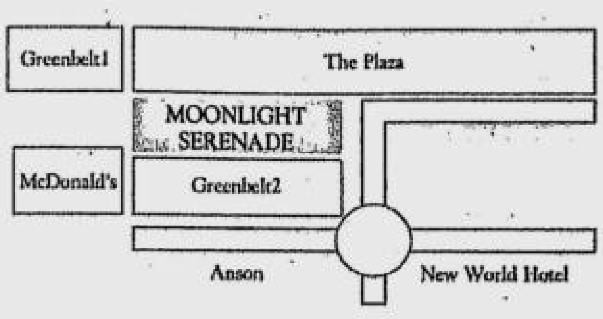

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December 22 - Bo Razon/Puro Ritmo

UNDERNEATH her meek and quiet facade, Lupe (Bonnevie) is a woman seething with repressed passion.

Dina Bonnevie plays submissive wife in 'Tatarin'

BY EDMUND L. SICAM

DINA Bonnevie's movie for the Metro Manila Film Festival is "Tatarin," based on the classic play by Nick Joaquin. She plays "Lupe," a role coveted by many serious actresses.

On the surface, Lupe is a meek, quiet woman who is subservient to her husband, Don Paeng (Edu Manzano). However, beneath that surface is a woman seething with repressed passion that finally explodes during the Tatarin procession. Dina describes Lupe: "She is a submissive woman, she serves her husband, she's a good mother, a good wife. Eventually she cavorts with the cousin of Paeng, Guido (Carlos Morales)."

Oppressive society

Dina says that she used to dream of being born in the 1920s, which is the setting of the movie. However, ever since she realized how oppressive society was toward women at that time, she has changed her mind.

"Only because I was fascinated with all the clothes they were wearing and their costumes. I was fascinated with corsets, I liked that. But when I found out the way women were treated then, I don't think so! Because fine, you were a doña, but it's like being married to somebody right now who's probably a taipan but if you're not allowed *naman* to express yourself, you're not allowed to take a course that you would like to take, or to speak out your opinions—so, what point is there in living? You're just existing, you're just a bird in a golden cage."

She says she would not have been happy living in those times, especially since she is happy in this one. She is proud of the many things she has achieved: She has taken up painting, she enrolled in computer classes, she took up French, she was able to put up her own business and she has done many movies in which she has proven her worth as an actress. These are things that she feels she would never have been able to pursue had she been alive in the 1920s. "If I were alive during that time, what would be my achievement? *Wala*, wife and mother *lang*."

Sexually repressed

According to the research Dina did to enhance her portrayal of Lupe, the women during that time were sexually repressed. "They were not allowed to scream, they were not allowed to enjoy. That's why they coined the phrase, 'You're the kind of woman I would like to take home to Mom,' because a woman you would take home to your mom would be a woman who would not be expressive of herself sexually."

Dina goes on to explain that at that time, there were *casas* where men would go and have fun with other women because the wife was considered sacred. "The woman was only there as a uterus, *parang* babymaker *ka lang*. You're just there to serve your husband."

Another role of the wife at that time was to make her husband look good by being beautiful for him. Dina elaborates, "So, *kung maganda yung* wife, '*Ay! Ang galing niya!*' *kasi ang ganda ng wife, kutis porselana. O kunyari, coloratura iyan! Magaling kumanta ang* wife, so, *galing ng* husband! It was always attributed to the husband and never to the wife."

DINA and Edu Manzano as the Moretas.

BONNEVIE. Bird in a golden cage.

So, if the wife "misbehaved" and had an affair with, say, the driver, that would be a disgrace for the husband. "That's why there's a line in the film that Lupe says: '*Bakit, dahil kapag nawalan ka ng respeto sa akin, mawawalan ka na rin ng respeto sa sarili mo*?' Because then, the ego of the men was always according to how their wives were seen."

Mistresses

Dina shares that during those times, it was accepted by society that the Dons had *queridas* waiting in the wings. They were even housed in different areas of the *hacienda* and family members all knew that those women were the Don's mistresses. "The *queridas* were there to give them (fun). Sometimes, *pag naglolokohan ang mga lalaki*, they would drink wine and say, '*Venga las mujerees!*' *Parang*, 'Give it to me! Bang me!' *Kasi yung wife, hindi puedeng ganoon. Kailangan kimi, dapat hindi siya nagre*-react.

"It was also common for the *doñas* during those times to have affairs. But once caught, *patay*! It's either they were sent away or the husband had to accept everything," Dina explains, referring to Lupe and Paeng's situation. "Paeng finds out about Lupe's affair with Guido but he loves her so he has to accept her, *kundi, masisira ang pangalan niya as* Don Paeng Moreta."

Dina has a few things in common with Lupe. She admits that she was a submissive wife in the past. "I gave up my career for my husband. I served him hand and foot, quietly obeyed whatever he said." Later on she realized that she wanted to assert her rights and express herself. "You give up a lot of things for your family life and your husband, but you feel shortchanged. You don't get what you expect from the deal, like fidelity. When there's infidelity, of course you begin to think, '*Teka...bakit ako magsasakripisyo* to give up everything? *Hindi naman ako* happy.' I'd rather I assert my rights, be my own woman, have my own job, earn my own money, take care of my kids and look for someone who will make me happy."

Mistake

She admits that this was her mistake in the past: She used to be dependent on men for her happiness. She kept wishing, "*Sana may* boyfriend *ako. Sana may asawa ako. Sana ganito.* In the end, because of that desire to always have someone, you sort of shortchange yourself. You sell yourself short and give up whatever principles you have, whatever desires or dreams you still want to fulfill.

"I'm not saying that I can live without a man," Dina clarifies, " but it's not the end-all and be-all. If you have enough love for yourself, if you give yourself enough time to discover yourself, and make yourself whole as a person, it's just the icing on the cake."

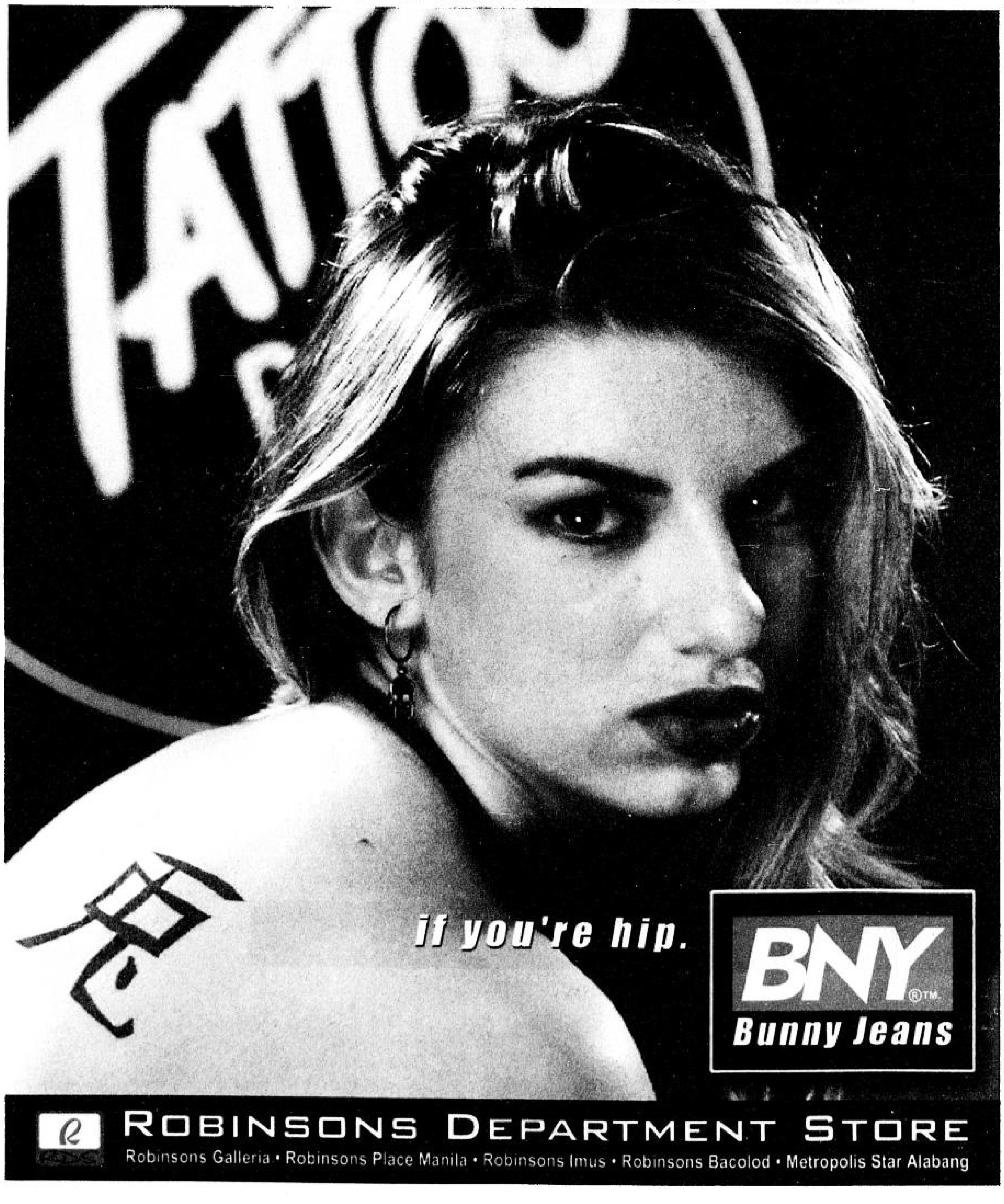
She says she is content with her life right now. "I'm very happy. I'm alone but being alone doesn't mean being unhappy." Dina is not about to let anybody take away her happiness. "*Kasi* there's always this false sense of happiness, *e*. You say you'll be happy if you're married, you'll be happy if you have this or that in your career. Point is, if you're not happy with yourself first, nothing else can make you happy."

Sheltered childhood

Dina shares that she came from a very sheltered childhood. Although her mother was quite liberated, her father was conservative. She reveals that because of her decision to join show biz, she was hit with the belt many times. Again like Lupe in the movie: "Even in this film, *sinisinturon yung mga babaeng hindi nagbe*-behave." Dina reveals that the only reason she was able to become an actress was because her father was not home at that time. "*Pagpunta niya sa* Europe, *nag-artista ako*!" She also shares with us the real reason she joined the movies: "Because I was in love with Alfie Anido, and that was the only way I could see him! He wasn't allowed to visit me. So, *pag-alis ng tatay ko, sabi ko*, I'm going to be an *artista* so I can be with Alfie, *kasi bawal*!"

Teenage problems

She says she had a hard time as a teenager. "Of course it was difficult! JS prom, *siya pa ang maghahatid, nakaka-asar*! *Tapos, naghihintay sa labas ng* prom!" But Dina harbors no ill feelings toward her father. She says that was just the way he was brought up. Now that she is an adult, she is very close to him. "Now, we treat each other like friends. We're like *barkada*." However, she says she does not believe in this style of raising children. "*Lahat ng pag-istrikto ng* daddy *ko, di ko ginawa sa mga anak ko*. I treat my children like friends, so they open up to me. They tell me their problems."



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Licking the sponsorship problem on TV through events marketing

"**MOMMY** Academy's" executive producers Tessa and Rico Geronimo (right) with a priest-friend.

By Bibsy M. Carballo

A CONVERSATION with any producer on television today is likely to elicit the same response. "We need to cut costs because the advertisers are not coming in like before. The economic situation has caused many shows to fold up and the only way to stay afloat is to economize"—that, more or less, would be the typical answer.

FROM left, Dr. Rico Geronimo, Dr. Raul Fores, Chiqui Roa-Puno, Dr. Ma. Teresa Gustillo-Villasor, Pia Sebastian and Tessa Geronimo.

Replays

Thus, the larger networks have been forced to terminate stars with high talent fees, opt for more replays, which previously was looked down upon, refrain from utilizing outside directors and creative persons and instead depend on in-house talents, offer better packages and bonuses to advertisers, hold a tighter rein on production costs, etc. And the end does not yet appear to be in sight.

If this is the prevailing scenario in the networks, what would be the case with the small independent producer, who not only has to shell money out for production expenses but for airtime costs as well?

Rico Geronimo, producer of the educational child-care show "Mommy Academy" on ABC-5, 11-11:30 a.m. Saturdays is apprehensive but not disconsolate. The Gerry Geronimo Productions that produces two educational telemagazines "Ating Alamin" on agricultural concerns and "Mommy Academy" on parenting and child-care is, like all others, dependent on advertising for its lifeblood. However, they are experimenting with other ways and means of keeping afloat.

Support

Sometime ago, "Mommy Academy" lost the support of its big major sponsor which opted to take a sabbatical while waiting for a better business environment. The alternatives left the husband-and-wife team of producers Rico and Tesa Geronimo were to go off the air and similarly await better times, or cut costs and increase media value for existing advertisers. They opted for the latter.

Going off the air would not only signify admitting defeat, but would also be in essence throwing down the drain three years of hard work in building up the audience of "Mommy Academy," and disappointing hundreds of mothers who have come to depend on the show for parenting advice.

Rico thought over the matter very carefully, discussing it with his wife and staff before deciding to continue. What it would mean was harder work, thrice the amount usually involved. But then, everyone felt it would be worth it to save the show, and along with it their responsibilities to their audience.

In November this year, "Mommy Academy" embarked on its first big event, earmarked as a marketing strategy. One of the most popular segments of the TV show is "Pedia Talk," where the physical, mental and emotional development of children is discussed with experts. This is the portion that elicits the most calls and written requests for answers to the problems parents encounter.

Forum and seminar

The producers decided to hold a free live, interactive forum and seminar expounding on this segment and billed it "Pedia Talk Live," at the Intercontinental Hotel Grand ballroom.

THE AUDIENCE at "Pedia Talk Live.".

The amount of expense and work involved in mounting the seminar and open forum can only be adequately quantified by the satisfaction of the participants and advertisers. The seminar involved the participation of Makati Medical Center doctors and two mothers.

The doctors were Dr. Maria Teresa Gustilo-Villasor, chief clinical psychologist of the Department of Neurosciences of Makati Med; Dr. Maria Isabel Trapaga-Avanceña, pediatrician; plus Makati Med's Medical Director, Dr. Raul G. Fores. The mothers were Pia Cayatano-Sebastian, who has pioneered in educational toys, and Chiqui Brosas-Hahn, US-trained advocate of breastfeeding and natural birth. Chiqui Roa-Puno, "Mommy Academy" host, emceed the seminar.

The seminar was so successful that the "Mommy Academy" producers have decided to mount monthly live events to support the TV show.

Bonus

On hindsight, Rico Geronimo says that marketing events such as this are packaged with TV sponsors, with the event as a bonus for the client. "Sponsors are not just paying for the media mileage on television, but they are also exposed to their market or their end-users during the event. They can directly communicate and interact with the members of the market who are physically present during the event," he explains.

On TV today, there are two basic types of programming, broad-based and niche. The first goes after the broadest cross-section of the market with highly rating shows on primetime, and costs a lot to produce (location based dramas, big star sitcoms, variety entertainment shows). The second is non-prime, goes after a small, specific market, costs less to produce and charts no ratings (educational shows, sports, travel docus).

Shows like "Ating Alamin" and "Mommy Academy" fall within the category of niche programming, with the latter going after mothers and everyone involved in proper child rearing. Obviously, its disadvantage is the lack of ratings to show advertisers. However, its advantage is its precise focus.

Money's worth

"Sponsors see the program as an effective avenue for advertising their product, since the niche audience is exactly the market they are targeting. With this, they are really getting their money's worth," explains Rico.

"Most advertisers nowadays are realizing that even if they place their budgets on high-rating shows, they don't get the results they expect. At the end of the day, they have even spent more than they should have, and realize that they should have analyzed the situation better."

With the support of advertisers who see this advantage in niche programming, says Rico, "Mommy Academy" has survived these past three years.

With the success of the Pedia live seminar, Rico sees a further continuation of similar events. "We plan to do more forums at various hotels, offices and even the malls!"

And what's more, "Mommy Academy" will soon be heard on radio, as part of the plan to solidify and intensify its niche market.

'Bread and Tulips' is about finding yourself

By Christy Lemire

NEW YORK—"Bread and Tulips" is touted as a movie about finding love if you dare to look for it. But really it's about finding yourself.

Impromptu vacation

That's what happens to Rosalba, a bored Italian housewife who takes an impromptu vacation from her neglectful husband and teen-age sons.

It's "Desperately Seeking Susan" without the New York nightlife, "Nurse Betty" without the soap opera obsession.

Licia Maglietta shines in a beautifully unforced way as a woman who married at 21, had children quickly and now is on her own for the first time in her life.

Watching her blossom is a joy, and she gets a great deal of help with a wonderfully eclectic crew of new friends, including a waiter from Iceland, a holistic masseuse and an anarchist flower shop owner for whom she becomes an assistant. It's surreal in a modern-day Felliniesque way, but it works.

While on vacation with her husband Mimmo (Antonio Catania) and two sons, Rosalba's tour group stops at a rest area, and the bus pulls away while she's in the bathroom. Rosalba hopes to teach them a lesson by hitchhiking home, but then decides to visit Venice, where she's never been.

Cheap room

She rents a cheap room and eats dinner at a nearby restaurant. A stoic Icelandic waiter named Fernando (Bruno Ganz, the angel from Wim Wenders' "Wings of Desire"), who speaks in verse, befriends her and agrees to let her stay on his couch.

She gets to know his hippie-dippy, next-door neighbor, a holistic masseuse named Grazia (Marina Massironi), and takes a job as an assistant to a volatile, opinionated flower shop owner (Felice Andreasi).

Little by little she gains confidence in herself, and tiny accomplishments become major sources of joy: buying a flowered dress with the money she earned from her new job, enjoying a relaxing evening with Grazia, watching a chick flick on the couch.

And the small gestures Rosalba's new friends perform for her are touching. Every morning when she wakes up, she finds bread, cheese and orange juice waiting for her on the kitchen table, along with a handwritten note from Fernando (in verse, of course) wishing her a good day. This is the kind of attention she never got at home—and never knew how much she needed.

Meanwhile, back at home, Mimmo has hired someone to track her down: a plumber (Giuseppe Battiston) who's also a darts champion and a fan of detective novels. Here's his chance to play detective himself, which he takes very, very seriously—chain-smoking and slinking around corners in a trench coat and a hat—and he's hilarious.

Forgivable

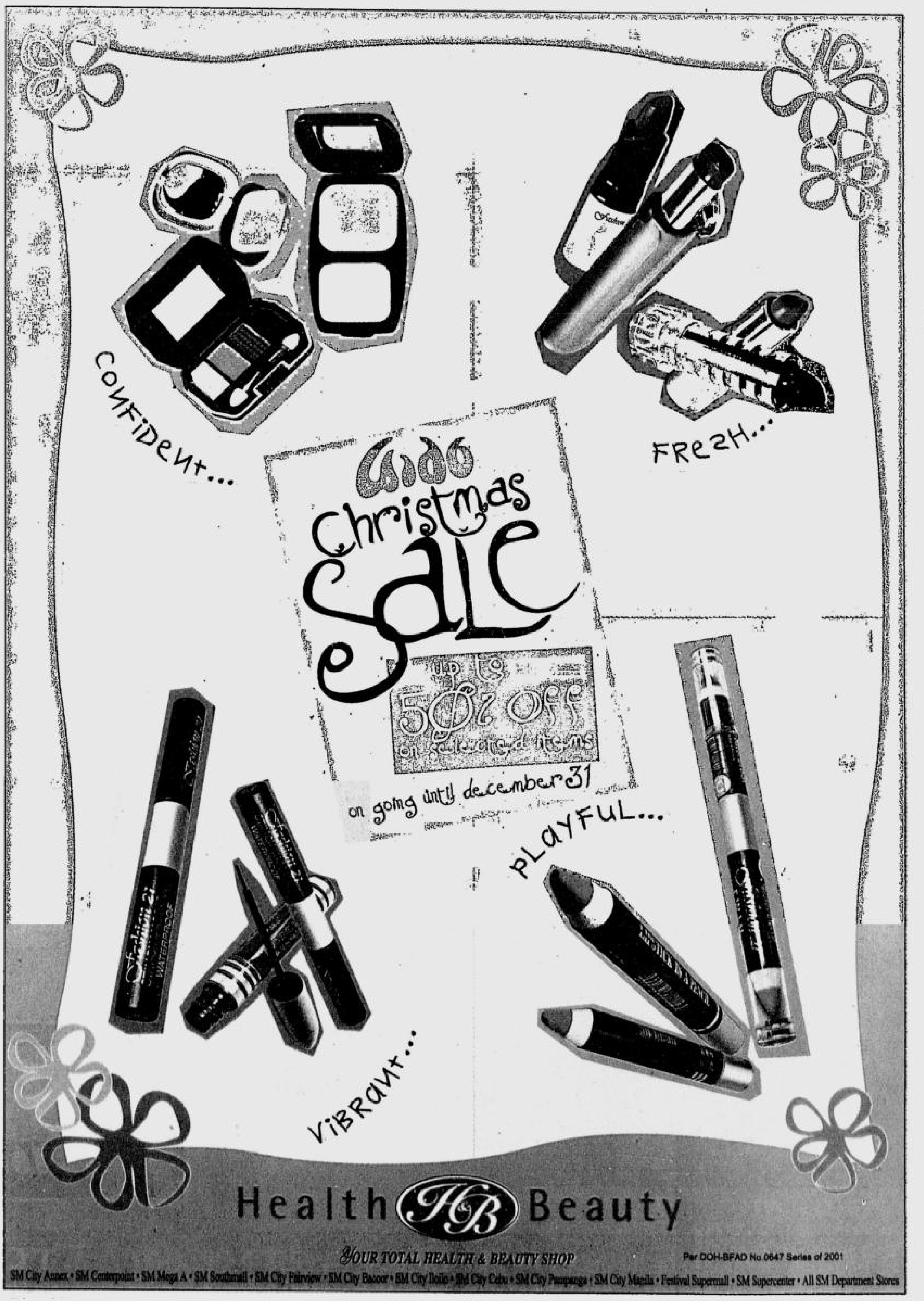
When forced to choose between her old life and her new one, it's obvious which way she'll go. But that's forgivable because the story is so sweet and funny.

Maglietta is perfect for the role—pretty but not distractingly beautiful, clumsy in an almost endearing way, she resembles an Italian version of Anne Archer.

Director Silvio Soldini, who co-wrote the script with Doriana Leondeff, gives her and the talented supporting cast plenty of room to charm.

"Bread and Tulips" ("Pane e Tulipani"), a First Look Pictures release, is in Italian with English subtitles. Running time: 104 minutes.

AP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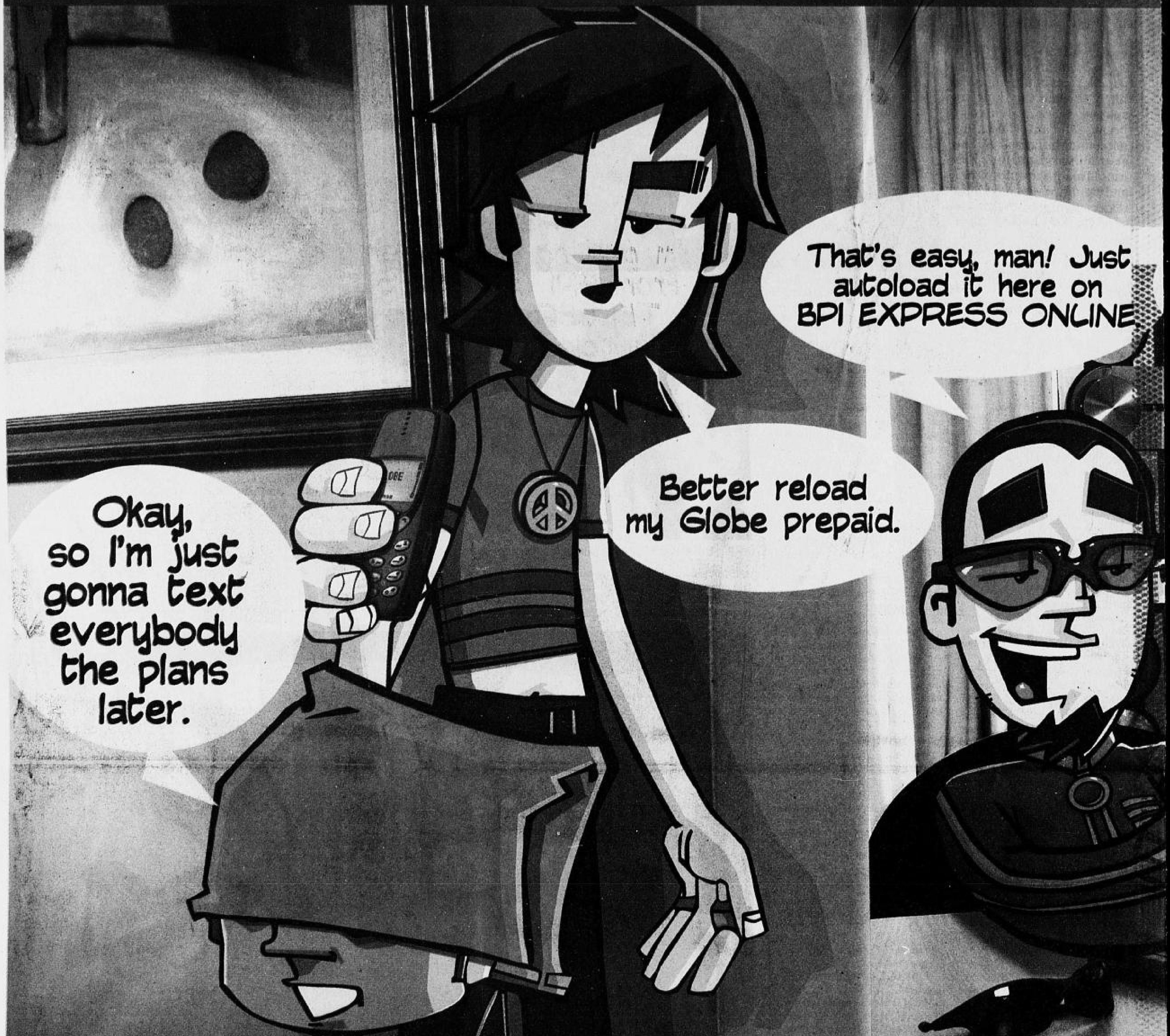
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Robert Redford plays 'rebel' general in 'The Last Castle'

THE GENERAL (Redford) is forced to do push-ups to "atone" for his "sins."

"THE CASTLE"—the unlikely last stop in the brilliant career of three star General Irwin (Robert Redford). Court-martialed and stripped of his rank, Irwin has been sentenced to the maximum security military prison, which is run with an iron fist by its warden, Colonel Winter (James Gandolfini).

Open hostility

Winter can't help but respect the once-legendary general, but it isn't long before that respect turns to resentment and then open hostility as Irwin continually confronts the warden on his methods.

Setting out to break Irwin by whatever means necessary, the colonel's tactics only fuel Irwin's defiance and galvanize the other prisoners to rally behind the general in his new mission: to seize control of the prison and remove Winter from his command. The men imprisoned in "The Castle" have been told that they are no longer soldiers . . . but they are about to prove that they can still fight a war.

"The Last Castle" stars screen legend Robert Redford, James Gandolfini, Mark Ruffalo, Clifton Collins Jr., Steve Burton, Brian Goodman, Paul Calderon, Frank Military, Michael Irby, Samuel Ball, Jeremy Childs and Delroy Lindo.

The action drama is directed by Rod Lurie, who wrote and directed last year's critically acclaimed political thriller "The Contender." The film is produced by Robert Lawrence from an original screenplay by David Scarpa and Graham Yost from a story by David Scarpa. Don Zepfel is the executive producer.

Central theme

"What are the qualities that make a leader? What is the DNA, so to speak, of leadership?" Director Rod Lurie poses the questions that, for him, sum up the central theme of "The Last Castle."

The original screenplay about a revered general whose leadership is tested when he is court-martialed and sent to military prison was somewhat inspired by a classic film that chronicled the story of a real-life military legend.

Screenwriter David Scarpa recalls, "I had wanted to write a war movie, but one set in the present day. I was watching 'Patton' when I was struck by an idea: What would happen to a legendary general if he were convicted of a major offense and sent to a stockade? Realizing that the general would fall under the control of the stockade's warden—a lower-ranking officer—my first thought was, 'Who salutes whom?' I realized that the resulting battle of egos could be the basis for a movie. It occurred to me that this was about a palace coup—a story of two men locked in a psychological chess game, each vying to become 'king.' It wouldn't be a movie about prisoners trying to escape, but rather fighting for control."

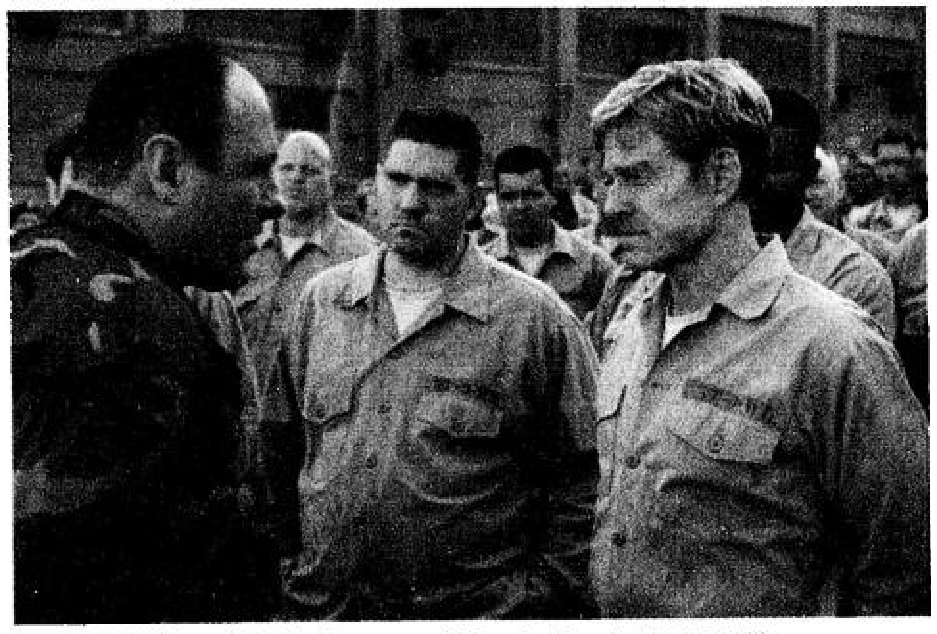
Upon hearing Scarpa's idea, producer Robert Lawrence recalls, "It immediately appealed to me for several reasons, the first being that I love stories about redemption and the triumph of the human spirit. "The story centers on a microcosm of men who we are led to believe had been idealistic at some point in their lives—idealistic enough to have signed up to serve in the military—but, for whatever reason, their lives took a wrong turn and they ended up in this institution.

"Nevertheless, they are all still capable of great courage and honor. When this court-martialed general comes along, he reawakens all those feelings, which leads to a conflict with the prison warden, Colonel Winter. Whereas General Irwin, believing that anyone is capable of redemption, looks for the good in these men, Winter feels they've dishonored the uniform he wears so proudly and labels them as irredeemable, and therein lies a clash of wills."

Veteran writer Graham Yost, who had recently gotten his own brand of military experience as a screenwriter on the HBO miniseries "Band of Brothers," later came onboard to collaborate on what became the final screenplay for

ROBERT/p.D10

REDFORD supervises his "troops" as The Castle burns.


GANDOLFINI and Redford square off in a battle of wits and will.

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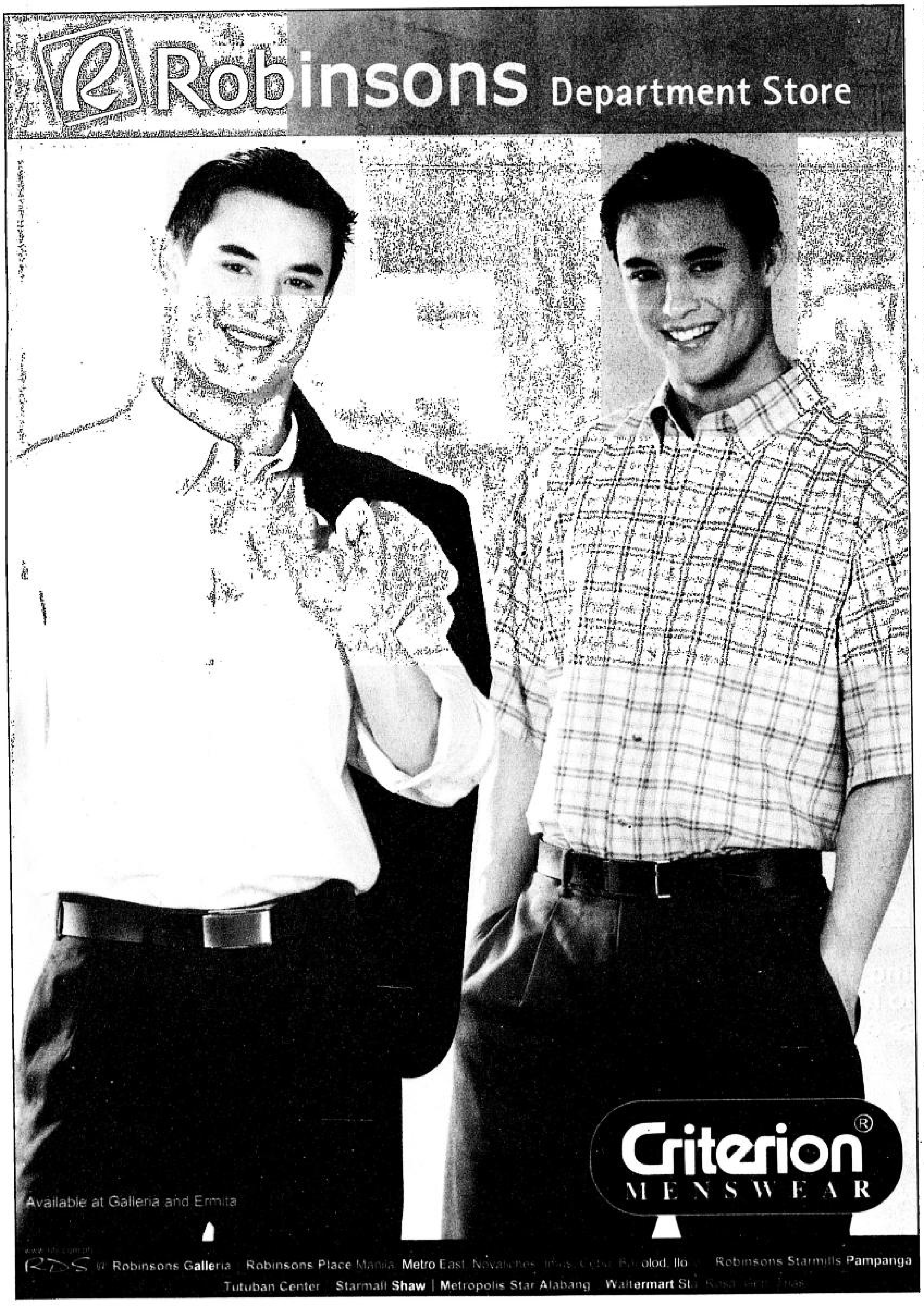
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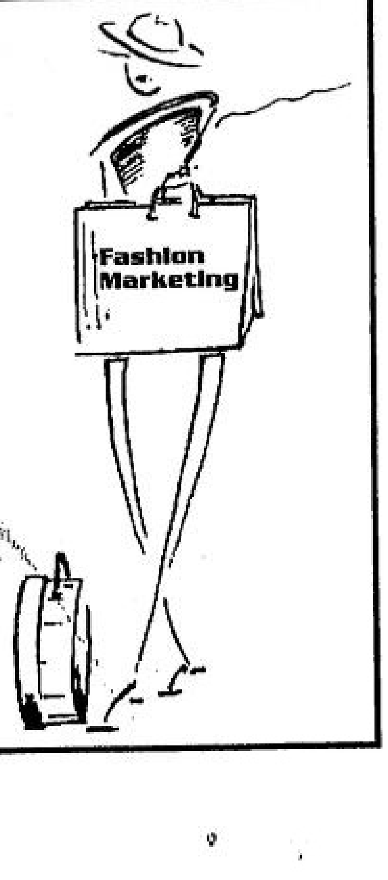

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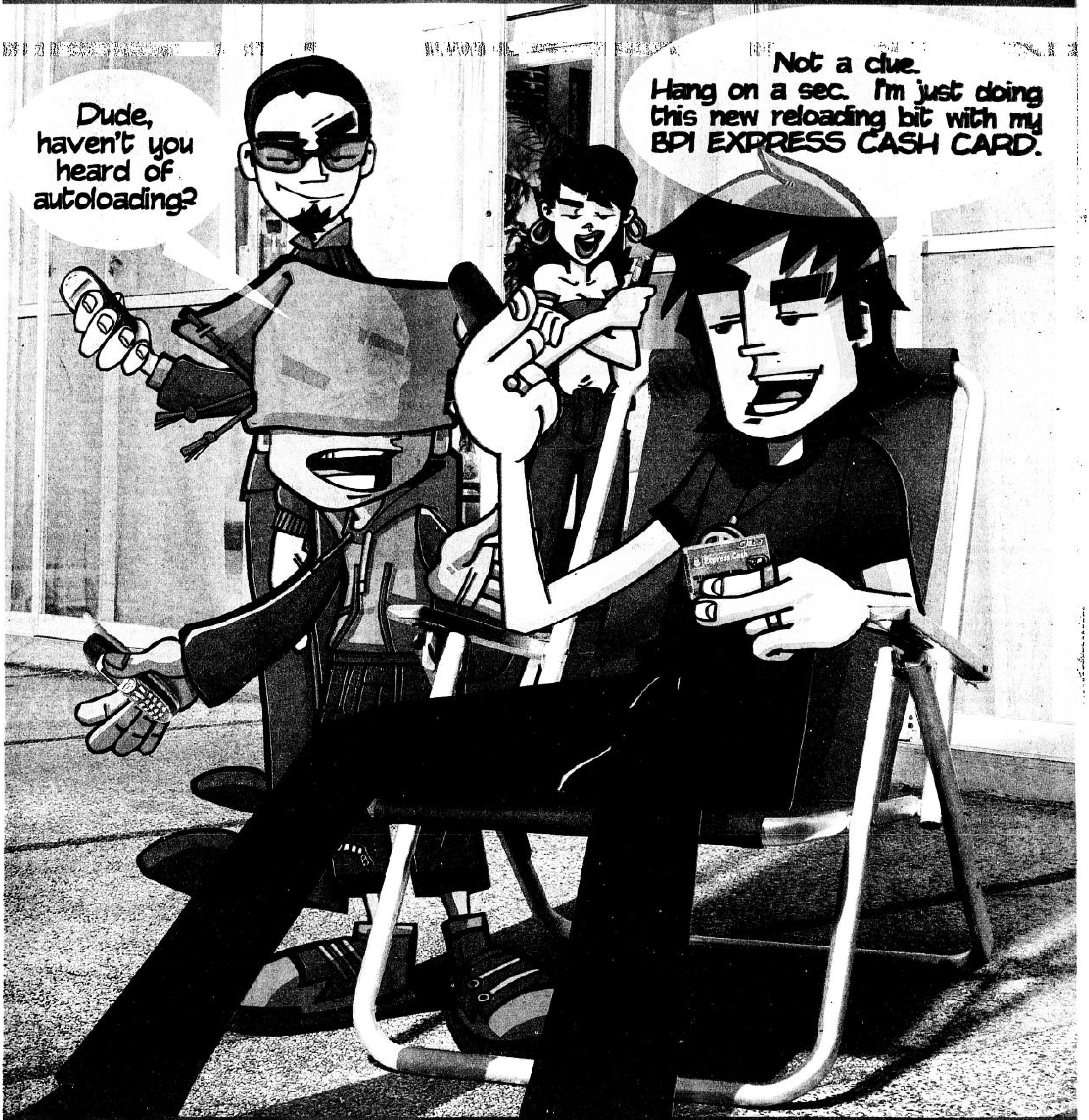
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Robert Redford plays 'rebel' general in 'The Last Castle'

A CHOPPER crashes and bursts into flames at the height of the conflict.

(From page D8)

"The Last Castle."

The director chosen to helm the "The Last Castle" brought a unique qualification to the table. While probably not the only current Hollywood director to have served in the armed forces, Rod Lurie is the only one to have graduated from the United States Military Academy, better known as West Point. Lurie's West Point education and subsequent military experience afforded him a special understanding of the forces at play in the story.

"Having Rod direct this movie was a real gift," Lawrence remarks. "With his military background, he can appreciate the mindset of the characters and the specific values at the crux of the conflict, and offers a tremendous degree of believability to the actors playing soldiers. Then, as a filmmaker, he has a wonderful capacity for working with actors and has a strong visual style. When you combine all that, you have the ideal director for the material."

On the heels of writing and directing the acclaimed political thriller "The Contender," Lurie states that "The Last Castle" was the first script he read that "got my creative juices flowing." He goes on to explain, "It immediately struck me because it dealt with a topic that is very dear to me, which is the definition of true leadership.

"The movie presents what I believe is a very simple concept: that leadership is innate. Real leaders have no choice in the matter; it's a destiny that comes from within. It isn't a function of rank, and you can't fake it or try to escape it.

"If you truly are a leader, you can't sit back and smell the roses. Pretty soon, you start commanding the roses to bloom. At West Point, I learned that leadership cannot be taught. In fact, contrary to what you might think, they don't make leaders at the Academy, they find them."

Screen legend

Lurie found the leader at the center of his story in screen legend Robert Redford, who stars as General Irwin. "I think Bob Redford is a natural leader and a man of enormous charisma and presence. Every word he says resonates," states Lurie, who goes on to reveal that his own admiration of the actor and Oscar-winning director nearly got in the way of Redford's casting.

INMATES force a "traitor" to change sides in the "war."

At their first meeting, Lurie recalls that he couldn't resist telling Redford that "All the President's Men" was the most important film in his life. That led to a three-hour conversation about that movie and their time was up, so Redford generously invited Lurie back for a second meeting. The following day, before he could think better of it, Lurie offhandedly mentioned that he had caught "The Candidate"—another of his favorite films—on television the night before, which led to another two-hour discussion on that film and, again, their time was up.

Somewhere in there, however, Lurie managed to get across the one point that sealed Redford's decision to do the movie, "which was lucky," Lurie laughs, "because I started to think I lost him because I was too big a fan of his work."

Good feeling

Redford counters, "We didn't need a lot of discussion or debate. Going in, I had a good feeling about Rod based on his film 'The Contender.' I met him, I liked him. He's smart, and I thought the juxtaposition of his background would contribute well to this. I mean, he's a staunch liberal who went to West Point. Put that one together. But it was his answer when I asked him what the film was about that did it. Basically, Rod said the film was about the character of leadership, and that's what I hooked into.

"I was also drawn to the role of Irwin," Redford continues. "He is a very interesting character—a military general who is court-martialed for violating the very code he always stood for. Because he accepts his guilt, he submits himself to the punishment of prison, where he meets Colonel Winter. The through-line of the piece is the contest between these two characters—one born to lead and the other born to want to lead, which doesn't necessarily make you a leader. I thought that was good stuff."

James Gandolfini, the Emmy-winning star of HBO's "The Sopranos," stars as Irwin's adversary, Colonel Winter, the prison warden who is at first somewhat awed by Irwin's presence, but eventually feels his command threatened by the general-turned-prisoner.

Fascinating

Lawrence notes, "What's fascinating about the relationship between the two men is that Irwin is someone the colonel has looked up to his entire career. But now Winter, who has never set foot on a battlefield, and has to fight the first war of his life against the ultimate general."

Winter's admiration for General Irwin is something to which James Gandolfini could relate, as he shared an equal respect for the man playing him. "The first thing that attracted me to this film was the opportunity to work with Robert Redford," the actor says. "The story was basically the two of us pitted against each other, which I was excited about . . . and very honored, actually."

Gandolfini took an objective approach to the conflict between the two men, trying to see it through Winter's eyes, rather than portraying him as the villain of the piece. "In Winter's mind, he's doing the right thing," Gandolfini asserts. "His prison is very secure, his guards are safe, and the prisoners don't like him. He's good at his job, which is all he knows, so when that is challenged by Irwin coming to the prison, it throws everything in his life off-balance. Winter was different from other roles I've had because he's very internal. Usually I play people whose emotions are more accessible, but he keeps everything inside. I don't think you can read him all that easily, which was very interesting for me to play."

Interesting was also the word used by Lurie in describing Gandolfini, whom he holds was his first and only choice for the role of Winter. "Jim is a very interesting man. First of all, he's just the most charming, down-to-earth guy I've ever met. Working with him as an actor was also very special because he had a complete grasp of his character and was able to give me an amazing level of performance day after day.

Perfect fit

"Going over the script with him, I found his intellect and insight to be simply extraordinary, which is a whole side of him that I don't think has ever really been explored onscreen. I realized that Colonel Winter, who is an intellectual rather than a warrior, was a perfect fit for Gandolfini, and it worked beautifully."

As the clash between Irwin and Winter escalates, one prisoner appears to be playing both ends against the middle. Mark Ruffalo plays the role of Clifford Yates, the prison's resident bookie who takes every opportunity to run a game, even taking bets on if and when the disgraced General Irwin will commit suicide. Lurie cast Ruffalo in the pivotal role after seeing his star-making performance in the acclaimed indie feature "You Can Count on Me." Lurie recalls, "I saw the film and said, 'That's him. Get him in here. Let's cast him right away.'"

Great part

Ruffalo recalls, "I read the script and loved it and thought Yates was a great part. He's an army brat whose father had come home from Vietnam damaged and not much of a father after that experience. So even though Yates wound up going to West Point and becoming an officer himself, he never had any respect for the military or his position in it and got busted for running drugs. In prison he becomes the bookie, which gives him a lot of influence, but it also keeps him from ever taking sides with anybody. He ostracizes himself."

Ruffalo continues, "When Yates meets Irwin, who actually served with his father, he views him at first as embodying all the attributes of just another military man who uses people for his own gain. Colonel Winter sees this and tries to make a deal with Yates to sell out Irwin and his fellow prisoners, so Yates is caught between the two of them and finally has to choose a side."

Lurie offers, "Yates is the only prisoner who isn't falling for the idealism that General Irwin brings to The Castle, so he could go either way. The great quality Mark brings to the character is that you have no clue which direction he's going to take. He's just a remarkable young actor."

Following orders

The other character who is ultimately torn between following orders and following his conscience is Winter's second-in-command Captain Peretz, played by Steve Burton. "Peretz doesn't necessarily like his job; he's just following orders, but he sees the colonel start crossing the line with the inmates after Irwin's arrival," Burton observes.

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‘Bandits’ is a stop-start caper that both entertains and annoys

By David Germain

LOS ANGELES—The crime-spree comedy "Bandits" is loaded with punchy lines, amusing sight gags, clever car stunts and a good quartet of main characters that play well off one another's differences.

Yet it's overloaded with drab downtime between robberies, some drawn-out scenes and a clunky framing device that repeatedly interrupts the film's pacing.

The result is a stop-start caper that annoys or bores almost as much as it entertains.

Impressive threesome

The impressive threesome of Bruce Willis, Billy Bob Thornton and Cate Blanchett, with solid support from Troy Garity, bring the film in much higher on the laugh meter than Harley Peyton's passably funny script merits.

Director Barry Levinson lets "Bandits" drag on far too long, though, devoting two hours to subject matter that should have been handled in about 90 minutes.

Willis plays bullheaded prison inmate Joe Blake, who swipes a cement truck and crashes out of the slammer with hypochondriac buddy Terry Collins (Thornton) along for the ride. Lily-livered Terry obsesses on imagined ailments both physical and psychological, including his fear of antique furniture, Charles Laughton and Benjamin Disraeli's hair.

The two hit on a low-risk scheme to rob banks: Take the managers hostage at their homes the night before, have a nice meal there, then head to work with them the next morning and grab the cash before the banks open.

They journey south from rural Oregon to Los Angeles, becoming TV celebrities known as the "Sleepover Bandits" as they stockpile greenbacks to finance the nightclub Joe wants to open near Acapulco.

Plan

"That's Mexico," Terry notes when Joe brings up the plan.

WILLIS AND THORNTON. Play characters who hit on a low-risk scheme to rob banks.

"Right. That's where they keep Acapulco, Terry," Joe responds.

"But I have sanitation issues, Joe," Terry says.

Joining the bandits is Joe's cousin Harvey (Garity), who sets himself on fire and leaps from daunting heights in training to become a Hollywood stuntman.

Hungry for adventure

A chance highway encounter tosses bored housewife Kate Wheeler (Blanchett) into the mix. Hungry for adventure, Kate tags along and sparks a romantic tug-of-war that threatens Joe and Terry's friendship.

Willis is in his generally effective bad-boy comic mode, though his smirking, ready-to-rumble disposition is nothing viewers haven't seen a dozen times before in his lighter action flicks.

Blanchett's Kate is a lovely looneybird, a sign she has the chops for physical farce.

Garity—who played his father, Tom Hayden, in last year's "Steal This Movie"—displays languid charm as the droning, dreaming Harvey.

While Thornton's Terry sounds off a few too many times on his neuroses, his befuddled self-absorption and spanked-puppy hesitancy make the character a delight to watch. Ostensibly the straight man, Thornton shines with stoic comic expressionism worthy of Buster Keaton.

Interludes

The holdup scenes and getaways are crisp and engaging, but Levinson tarries on the interludes, ticking away needless minutes on fairly forgettable interaction among the robbers.

The biggest theft of moviegoers' time comes with an irritating series of flash-forward interviews Joe and Terry do with the host of a true-crime TV show.

They're meant as transitions between heists and set-ups for an armed standoff that ends Joe and Terry's bank careers. But they bog down the story and are deadly dull compared with the clashes and camaraderie of Joe and Terry on the road.

"Bandits" needed to follow the prime rule of the professional bank robber: Get in and out as quickly as possible. *AP*

Director spent seven years on ‘Lord of the Rings’ films

By Sinead O'Hanlon

LONDON—When the first of the much-heralded "Lord of the Rings" films opens this month, no one will be happier than its exhausted director, Peter Jackson.

Tired but exhilarated

After three years of hype and hysteria, rumor and gossip about the $270 million project, a tired but exhilarated Jackson said it was time for people to stop talking and start watching.

"I'll be relieved to have people finally see the film. It is just a movie and it needs to have an identity as a film now and not as just this Internet buzz," he said ahead of Monday's world premiere of the first part of the trilogy, "The Fellowship of the Ring."

Until now, Jackson has been little-known outside his native New Zealand. But his part in bringing J.R.R. Tolkien's epic fantasies to the big screen have established his credentials as a Hollywood "player" even before the first film is released.

Tolkien's novels about the imaginary world of Middle Earth, peopled by hobbits, dwarves, elves and wizards, have won legions of fans since they were published almost 50 years ago but have never been completely translated to the screen.

New Line Cinema took an unprecedented gamble in agreeing to finance all three Rings films before the first was released—a burden Jackson, 40, says weighed heavily on his shoulders.

Responsibility

"I felt a very heavy responsibility for the risk that New Line has taken. I've tried to make the best movie I can as my part of the process to help alleviate their risk," he said.

"But I'll certainly have a sense of relief if this film is seen to be doing OK."

Jackson's love for his subject is evident—he was a Tolkien fan long before he was a filmmaker.

His cheerful, bushy-bearded demeanor—coupled with his trademark bare feet and scruffy appearance—prompted cast and crew members to dub him the "real hobbit."

"I wish I could say that I relate more to some sword-swinging hero, but I don't. I feel much more like a hobbit," he chuckles.

Born on Halloween 1961, it is appropriate that all his films share common themes of the supernatural, magical and mysterious.

The massive budget and huge studio power behind "The Lord of the Rings" is a far cry from his self-financed first feature—the 1987 gory splatter fest "Bad Taste," which won him a devoted cult following and financed a string of blood-drenched comedies.

Later, his more mainstream offerings, true-life murder drama "Heavenly Creatures" and the ghost film "Frighteners," attracted international attention.

Mammoth undertaking

From the start, the Rings project was a mammoth undertaking, filmed in on location in New Zealand over 18 months with a cast and crew of 2,400.

Jackson said that he felt that the only way to go for it was "to give it everything and then some."

"I've spent seven years of my life on this project so far, pouring my heart into every single aspect of it. But I think that is the least we owe to Tolkien and the legions of fans around the globe."

The films have attracted much controversy with many Tolkien fans, and some members of the British author's family, saying his epics could never be successfully translated to the screen.

"Everyone is focused on what I think about the fans, if I feel pressure from all the fans out there. But the reality is that I have an equal degree of responsibility to the two thirds of people who will see this film who have not read the book."

He said that because of the need to simplify the complex plots and characters of the books, many elements fell by the wayside but there was no compromise on the visual impact.

With the next two films due for release in 2002 and 2003, it will be a long time before Jackson can look to other projects—but he said he had not left his splatter-film roots behind him.

"I have an idea for another horror movie I will shoot one day. But two more Lord of the Rings movies is enough for now." *Reuters*

WENDELL Ramos, Assunta De Rossi and Jay Manalo play passionate youths in Regal's Metro filmfest entry.

‘Hubog’ explores human relationships in a time of turmoil

By Edmund L. Sicam

FOR a while there, Regal executives were worried that "Hubog" might not make it to the Magic Seven in this year's Metro Manila Film Festival. There was talk that filmfest organizers frowned on the exhibition of bold films in this yearly event. Headlining the movie is Assunta De Rossi, whose last two movies, "Red Diaries" and "Sisid," established her as one of the strong heir-apparents to the Bold Queen title.

Here she plays the battered wife of Jay Manalo. Assunta's sister Alessandra is also cast in the movie as an autistic girl who is sexually abused by the bad guys.

Smooth sailing

As it turned out, the film experienced smooth sailing and made it to the final list. Director Joel Lamangan admits there is nudity and sex in his movie but "Hubog" is "not just about exposing the human anatomy, but the anatomy of the entire country. It is set between Edsa 2 and 3 and examines human relationships during a time of turmoil."

"*Tayo lang ang tanging bansa na hindi nire-*record *ang* historic changes," says Joel. "That's what we try to do in this movie. *Pero hindi siya istorya ng Edsa Dos o Tres. Istorya siya ng mga tao nung panahon na yon*, people acting through the dictates of their economic situation. The movie, however, does not offer a solution although there is an implication of change at the end of the movie. Whether the change is for better or worse will probably be in the sequel."

Joel says this is one movie where he didn't have to do a lot of rewriting. "All the movies I've done, *nagsusulat ako, meron akong* yellow pad. The script for this movie (written by Roy Iglesias) was very precise and concise. I didn't have to do any rewrites." Iglesias is also Joel's writer in the TV series "Your Honor."

Potential

The director is all praises for Assunta De Rossi. "I saw her potential as an actress in 'Red Diaries.' We need new good actresses. *Hindi ako nagkamali. Ang husay ng* performance *ni* Assunta." Assunta returns the compliment saying she learned a lot from *direk* Joel.

How did she feel while doing her sex scenes here?

"*Nandoon pa rin yung* discomfort. *Basta maganda ang labas*, OK *lang*. Besides, *maganda naman talaga ang istorya*. That's the important thing. It's not a sexy movie with drama, but a drama with sex."

The discomfort showed during the presscon for the movie. When excerpts from the movie were shown, Assunta had her hair down during the more revealing scenes. Was she ashamed of what she was doing? "*Hindi naman. Kaya lang, talagang hindi ako yun.* I'm not like that offscreen. *Hindi ko talaga kayang tingnan.*"

Sister Alessandra also has sex scenes in the movie but they're all implied. In playing an autistic character, she did not base her acting on what she'd seen in other movies. Joel felt that would only make her acting artificial. Instead, he motivated her during the shooting of the scene.

Alessandra's only problem is that she won't be able to watch the movie because she is only 17 years old and chances are the movie will get an "R" rating.

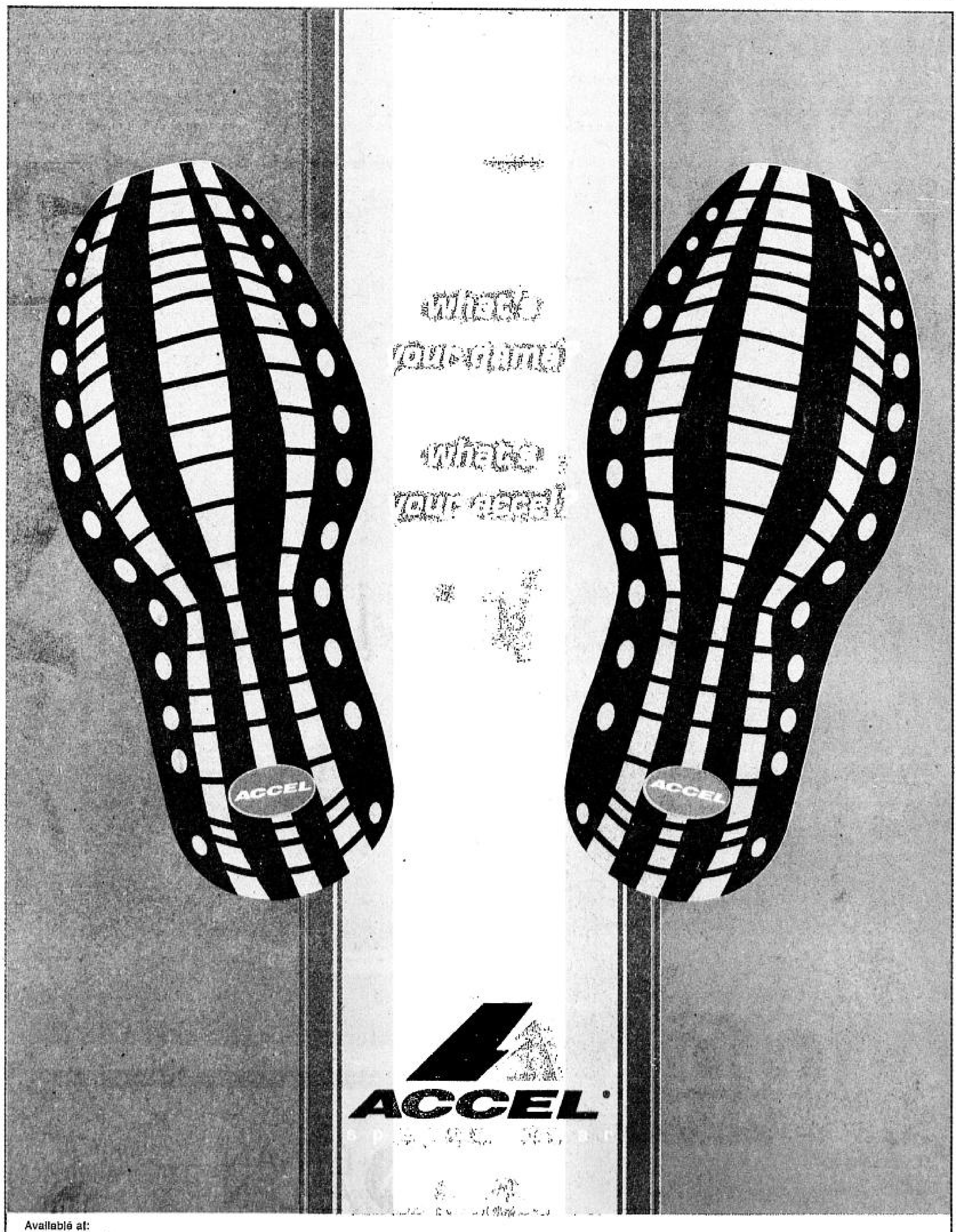
Playful

She was playful during the presscon, a big indication that she's still a child at heart. All throughout the proceedings, she was giggling and kidding with the other cast members.

When we talked to her one-on-one, she was more serious. We didn't get much from her because it was close to 3 p.m. and she wanted to go to the bank. She only had one hundred pesos in her wallet. We asked her if she had an ATM card. She replied in the negative, explaining it was her way of saving money. She can only withdraw money when the bank is open.

With the bold theme of the movie, Joel anticipates rough sailing with the MTRCB. However, he says that when he shoots a bold scene, he doesn't worry about the censors because it will limit him. It is during the editing stage when he considers how far he can go.

We learned later that two versions of the movie's trailer were X-ed by the Board. Regal had to come up with another version before it was able to get approval for the trailer.



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"COLLATERAL DAMAGE." "What would you do if you lost everything?"

'Collateral Damage' to be shown next February

HE'LL be back . . . as promised.

After postponing the release of Arnold Schwarzenegger's "Collateral Damage" in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks, Warner Bros. has rescheduled the terror-themed revenge thriller for a Feb. 8 release in the US and Feb. 13 in the Philippines.

Firefighter

In "Collateral Damage," Schwarzenegger plays a Los Angeles firefighter whose wife and child are killed when a downtown skyscraper is destroyed in a massive terrorist bomb blast, prompting him to go to Colombia on a mission to track down the killers.

The film, directed by the "The Fugitive" helmer Andrew Davis, features the tagline: "What would you do if you lost everything?"

Following the attacks on New York and Washington DC, anything related to terrorism was immediately scrapped.

"Collateral Damage," which had been slated for an October release, was indefinitely delayed by Warners. The studio pulled the plug on the film's website and recalled all trailers, prints, posters and other promotional material.

Warners' execs say "Damage" has scored well with test audiences. And Schwarzenegger believes that by February moviegoing masses will be ready for his flick.

"We needed to let America grieve and heal following the attack on our nation," he says in a statement. "We were confident there would be an appropriate time to release this film and trusted the audience would tell us when the time would be right.

Morale

"Entertainment has always played an important part in raising the morale of our nation during difficult times," the actor continues. "Even during World War II, the movies brought the American people together, not only providing a necessary diversion, but also offering hope and heroes.

"I believe that in February, audiences will be ready to go to theaters to see movies like "Collateral Damage," where good triumphs over evil."

Meanwhile, several heroic, war-themed films have been bumped up as the US-led attacks on Afghanistan continue to progress.

Twentieth Century Fox has announced it's moving up the debut of "Behind Enemy Lines," in which Gene Hackman and Owen Wilson star in the story of the dramatic rescue of a downed Navy pilot during the bombing of Bosnia.

Again, studio representatives cite high marks from test audiences—purportedly some of the best in the studio's history—as the reason for the film's release shifting from January to Nov. 30.

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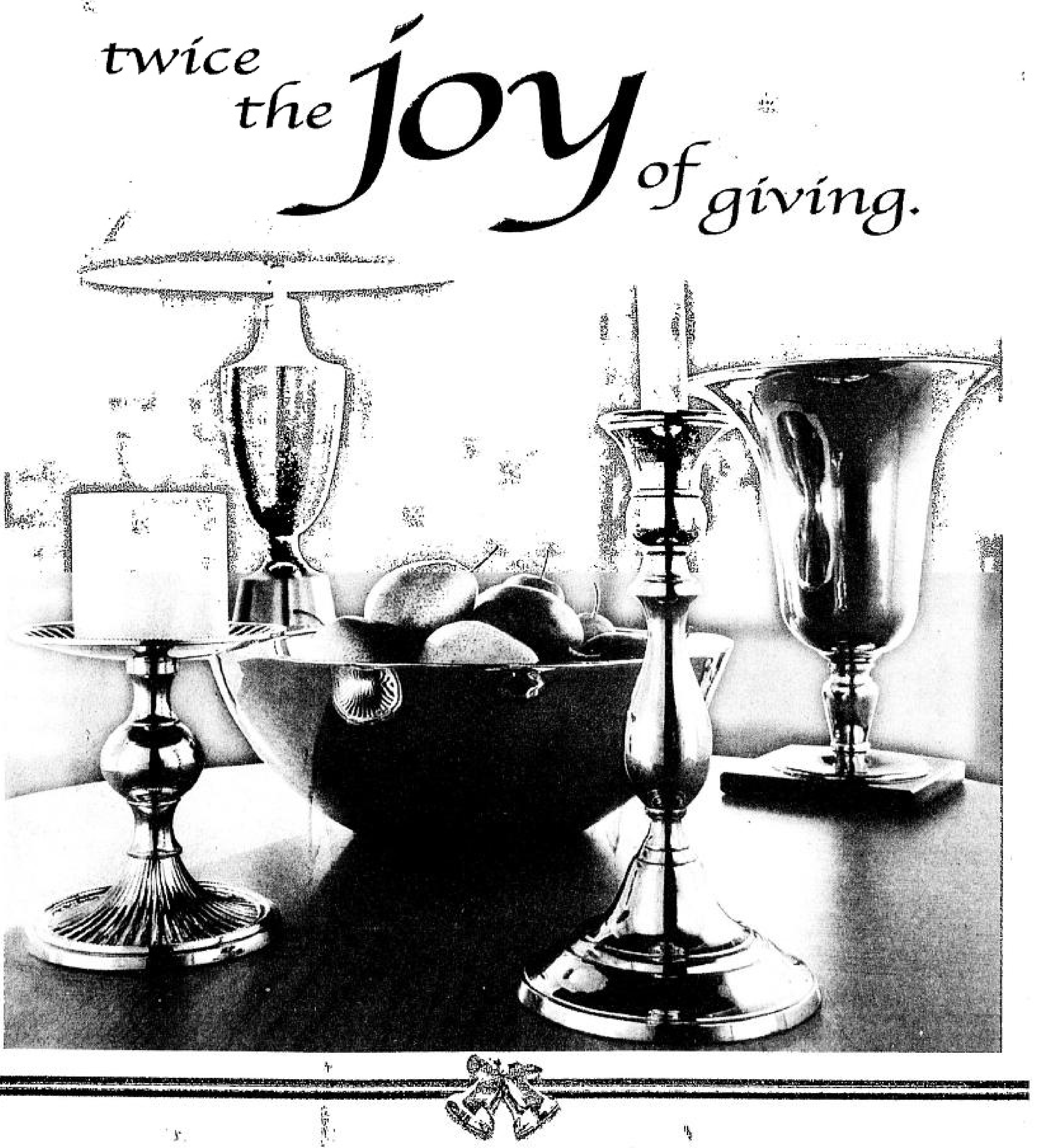

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2001 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER E1

Saturday SPECIAL

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'Lord of the Rings' opens at glitzy London premiere

By Paul Majendie

LONDON—"The Lord of the Rings" film epic was launched at a glitzy world premiere on Monday with critics already hailing the mammoth fantasy as a masterpiece.

The J.R.R. Tolkien trilogy that attracted at least 100 million readers over the last half century has been turned into three movies costing $270 million and taken New Zealand director Peter Jackson 18 grueling months to film with a cast of 2,400.

"The Fellowship of the Ring" is the first of the three films to be released every Christmas for the next three years and show business razzmatazz reigned supreme at the London premiere.

The film looks set to propel its diminutive hero, American actor Elijah Wood, to international stardom. Hollywood veterans such as Liv Tyler and British horror star Christopher Lee were on hand to watch Wood's turn as Tolkien's Frodo Baggins thrust him into the firmament.

More than 2,000 fans braved the chilly night in London's cinema-lined Leicester Square to greet the film's stars as they entered under a row of burning rings.

"We had a lot of fun and we had a lot of work," Tyler, who plays elf-maiden

LORD/p.E2

WOOD. Plays Tolkien's Frodo Baggins.

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Televiewers cite the 'contravidas' they love to hate

By Andy Bais

LOCAL TV soap operas have definitely given the likes of Judy Ann Santos, Claudine Barreto and Kristine Hermosa's respective acting careers an added boost. However, their characters on television would never be that memorable or miserable without much-needed help from their equally effective "tormentors"—the villainess or *contravidas*, which have become *de rigueur* in every TV soap.

Curvaceous

But gone are the days when *contravidas* had to look and act like the Bella Floreses or Etang Dischers of old. Contravidas nowadays are as curvaceous, and some even look better than the leads. The present crop includes the enviable company of Eula Valdez, Jean Garcia, Mylene Dizon, VJ Belinda Panelo and former child sensation Matet de Leon.

Anti-heroine roles have also become the jumping board for an actress' second lease on her acting career. Eula Valdez and Jean Garcia can credit their shift to this type of role for the resurgence in their careers.

So, who are today's television dramas' favorite *contravidas*, and why? A sampling of office workers, housewives, househelp and friends reveals that today's most popular *contravidas* are mostly regulars of a current TV soap drama.

Equally effective

A total of 27 individuals responded to our question and elaborated on why they chose a particular actress. Some even cited not only one but three names, and reasoned out that their choices were all equally effective and convincing.

As expected, most of our respondents were female—giving credence to the belief that TV soap dramas have more female than male followers.

Eleven names were mentioned. The results showed that Mylene Dizon is the top favorite, garnering 11 votes. Most of her admirers believe that her performance on ABS-CBN's "Hanggang sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan" is "natural *at talagang nakakainis.*"

From left, Isabel Rivas, Jean Garcia, Gladys Reyes and Mylene Dizon—"tormentors" all.

Siony Señeres, a single mom from Dumaguete City, says, "Everyone in our household is really mad at Mylene for making the life of Claudine Barreto difficult. She is so effective as Sally, *maiinis ka talaga sa pagka-walanghiya niya. Magaling siyang magkunwari at* devious *talaga. Gusto kong gawin ang* role *niya!*"

Ian Mark Cordero, an occasional stage actor and teacher from Davao City, is another Mylene admirer:

"*Gusto ko siya dahil lukaret siya. Maski hindi* clear *ang takbo ng* role *niya, gusto ko ang pagka-maldita niya.*"

A housewife from Parañaque, Josephine Barro, cites Mylene because "*mukha pa lang niya, kontrabida na. Magaling siyang mag-deliver ng lines at talagang bumabagay ang* facial expression *niya. Hindi siya* OA, *simple lang.*" Her husband Ogie adds, "*Magaling siyang mang-asar, maganda at* sexy *pa.*"

Realistic

"Pangako sa 'Yo" villainess, Jean Garcia came in second with eight votes. Her admirers were unanimous in saying that she is a natural actress. Talent manager and former singer Annette Lucido adores her because "'classy bitch' roles are perfect for her. She's very convincing and equally effective. So far, her portrayals are realistic, *hindi* OA; very believable."

Jenny Garcia, a confessed TV soap addict likes Jean not because they have almost identical names, but because "*bagay na bagay sa kanya ang* roles *na maldita. Mukha niya, gusto ko dahil mamamatay-tao talaga, pero maganda at* sexy *siya.*" Writer and Masscom teacher Cecile Genove cites Jean's "impeccable fashion sense."

Jeremy B from Cagayan de Oro City voted for Jean because "she justifies her role as a person with insecurities. She really mirrors an evil-doer."

Nora Cedrome, a school office secretary, approves of Jean because "she knows how to emote in a way *na* you will really hate her—*gusto ko talaga siyang sampalin!*"

Perennial TV contravida Gladys Reyes and veteran actress Isabel Rivas tied for the third spot with three votes each. Screenwriter and stage actor Ray Manalo raves over Gladys because "*lumalabas ang tunay niyang katarayan, parang di siya umaarte. Parang isinilang siyang contravida, di bagay sa kanya ang bida.*"

Ray's friend, exotic businesswoman Jeanne Lim, agrees with Ray's observation about Gladys and adds, "*Nakakainis talaga siya, bagay siyang kontrabida ni* Judy Ann Santos, *at di pwedeng baliktarin ang* roles *nila.*"

Stage actress

Stage actress, Astra Pimentel likes Gladys "*kasi magaling siyang gumamit ng lips at* nose *niya sa pag-arte.*"

Househelp Edna Lucero singles out Isabel Rivas "*kasi napakagaling niya sa* 'Recuerdo de Amor.' *Bagay na bagay talaga sa kanya.*" Grandmother Marina Barro cites Isabel "*dahil napakatunay ng arte niya at nakakainis talaga.*"

Garnering two votes each were Cherie Gil and another "Pangako sa Yo" regular, Eula Valdez. Scriptwriter Agnes de Guzman considers Cherie as "*contravida* with class. *Yung iba kasi,* OA, exaggerated *ang* facial expressions *at laging nanlalaki ang mga mata.*"

Another Cherie Gil loyalist is office staffer Oliver Oliveros: "Ms Cherie Gil exudes classic aristocracy and elegance. *Maski napapahiya siya* in the end, *taas-noo pa rin siya.*"

Singer Michelle de Guzman, on the other hand, likes Eula Valdez because "she has depth, not like the typical *contravida.* Subtle *kasi ang* attack *niya sa pag-arte, di puro taas-kilay. Kaya naman nagiging* realistic *ang mga* portrayal *niya.*" Cecile Genove says that, along with Jean Garcia, Eula has an impeccable fashion sense.

Also in the running as our local TV's favorite *contravidas* were Sunshine Dizon, Carmi Martin, Matet de leon, Princess Punzalan and Julia Clarete, garnering one vote each.

Expressive

Entrepreneur Dennis Kusin cites Princess Punzalan because "you really hate her when she acts as *contravida.* Very expressive *ang mga mata niya.*"

Housewife Mars Sioson likes Sunshine Dizon because "effective *siya* as contravida." She laments the fact that Sunshine left the TV soap that she used to appear in.

"*Palagay ko, mas sisikat siya kung mag-*stick *siya* as *contravida. Di siya bagay sa* role *na bida,*" she observes.

Student Julie Katada sees a bright future for Matet de Leon as a *contravida.* "This early, Matet shows a lot of promise *dahil ang dating niya ay pilya at maldita talaga.*"

Finally, office worker Marichu Albano hopes that Carmi Martin can be given more exposure on TV. "*Sayang ang* talent *niya,* and *contravida* roles fit *her talaga. Kaya nga,* favorite *ko siya!*"

'Lord . . .

(From page E1)

Arwen Undomiel in the film told Reuters.

"When I read the book and the script I really longed to be part of this movie," the scarlet trouser-suited Tyler said as reporters queued up to gather soundbites from the stars.

Dark tale

The film, a dark tale of the fight between good and evil played out by hobbits, elves, wizards and orcs, could go head to head with another magical mystery tale—"Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone"—when it is released on Dec. 19.

But both films faced an equally tough time—convincing readers, movie fans and film moguls that they could pull off the celluloid trick.

A 1978 animated version directed by Ralph Bakshi failed to capture the imagination of the film-going public or the admiration of the legions of Tolkien fans around the world.

The first feedback from critics of this latest version of "The Lord of the Rings" was euphoric.

"The movie works. It has real passion," Newsweek declared. "I really got a sense of awe and grandeur," said the film critic for Entertainment Weekly. "The effects are blended in extremely well with the fabric of the movie," Variety said.

Jackson said he did feel nervous about how the public would receive the film but was heartened by the early reviews.

"I'll be relieved to have people finally see the film because it has been the buzz on the Internet, there have been spies (on set), it has been gossip and rumor for three years now," he told Reuters.

Identity

"Three years is too long. People have just got to see it. It is just a movie and it needs to have an identity as a film now and not as this Internet buzz. I'll be relieved when it is out there."

Christopher Lee, who plays the fallen wizard Saruman, said he was seeing the film for the first time at the premiere but was confident it was going to be fantastic.

The 79-year-old veteran called Jackson one of the greatest film directors of the age. "Someone asked me what my greatest ambition in life is and I replied that it was to live to see the third film," Lee said.

Wood said the film was breathtaking and he hoped it would inspire a whole new generation to read the books.

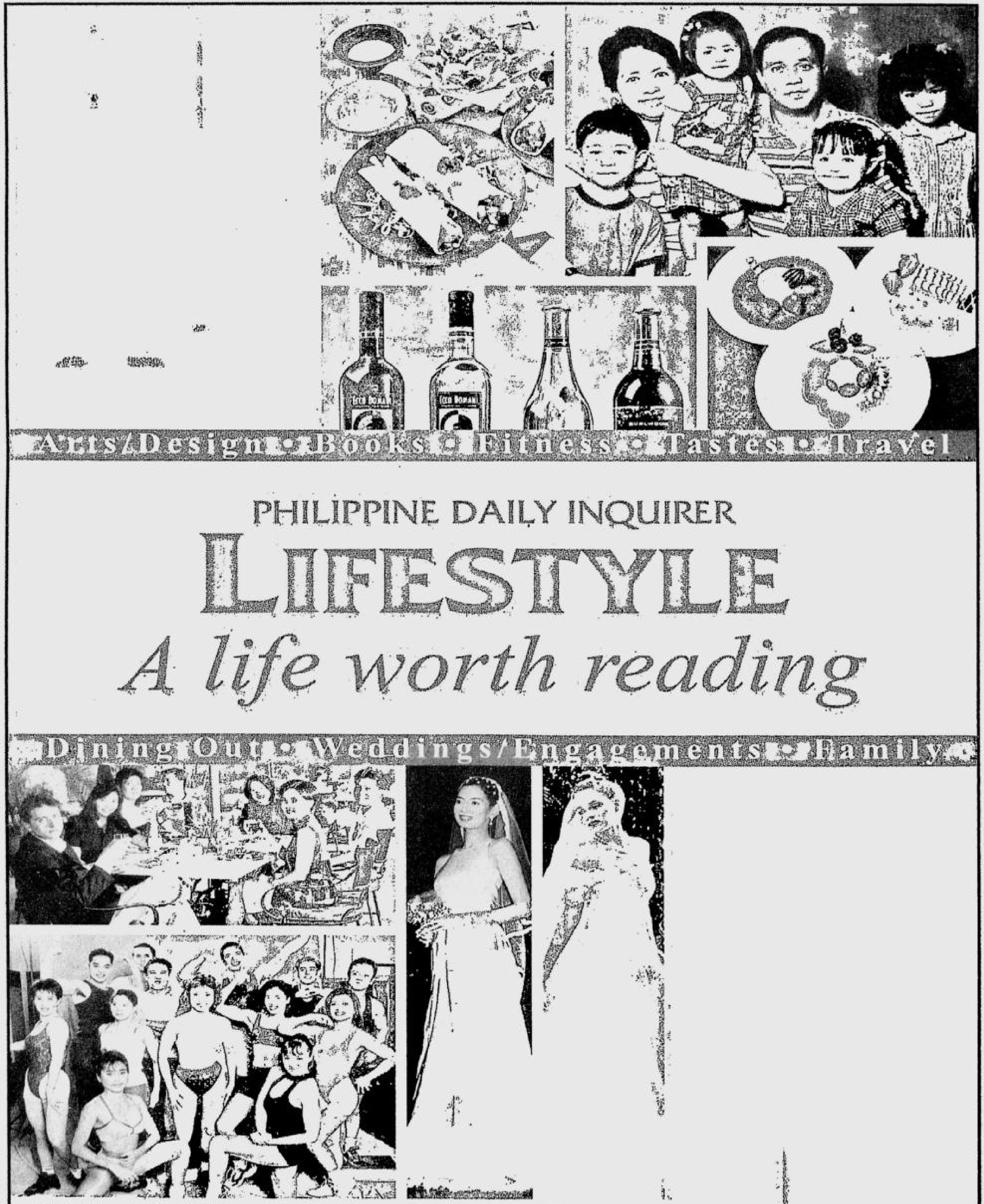
"I love it, I think it is wonderful. Everyone involved has done such beautiful work."

The film took more than a year to shoot and co-star Sean Bean said his role as the Orc-slaying warrior Boromir "was physically demanding."

"I think it was hard work but I think we were all so excited to be part of it that the adrenalin carried us through."

Sir Ian McKellan, who plays Gandalf the wizard, said making the movie was "everything I dreamed it might be."

"Any worries that I had that the story may be too complicated, that the special effects wouldn't be quite as magical as required absolutely vanished." *Reuters*



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Tom Cruise torn between two lovers

ASIDE from being the hottest properties in Hollywood, what do Cameron Diaz and Penelope Cruz have in common? Answer: they're in love onscreen with Tom Cruise in the Cameron Crowe-directed "Vanilla Sky."

Facade

Cruise plays David Aames who is a kind of "Prince of New York"—who inherited everything, worked hard at nothing, and is essentially the facade of what people think they want to be. Cruise says, "He's a guy with a lot of potential, and the film is his journey of self-awakening. It's the price that he pays for being careless with other people's feelings."

The love of David's life appears in the small, sensual form of Sofia Serrano, portrayed by Penelope Cruz. Ambitious and optimistic, Sofia exudes a positive, down to earth life force and sexuality that cuts through David's rarefied world of sycophants and opportunists. Instantly, she attracts him. And if David Aames will have his say: she's the last guileless girl in New York.

Cruz says she lobbied for the role, which she secretly considered her own, since she had played Sofia in "Abre Los Ojos." It didn't take much to convince director Cameron Crowe, co-star and producer Tom Cruise and co-producer Paula Wagner that she was their Sofia as well.

Allure

Cameron Diaz, on the other hand, played Julie Gianni-a vulnerable woman despite her outward assurance and allure. She finds herself in a precarious emotional position common to many women. "Julie is the good-time girl, the one who knows how to make people, especially guys, comfortable without any pressure.

"But that isn't enough for her anymore, especially once she meets David Aames and falls in love with him. They don't make that commitment to one another, and at first, that's fine. But when we meet Julie in the film, she's trying to define the direction of the relationship, and that effects everything in her life."

Diaz explains that she was drawn to the role because Julie not only has a unique personality, but is also someone with whom many women can relate.

A friendly working relationship between the two on-screen rivals, Diaz and Cruz, also developed, and together with their shared on-screen paramour Cruise, the trio had a great time. In fact, though the three actors didn't share many secrets together, they were inseparable on those days that their work dovetailed, laughing and joking between takes. Both Cruz and Diaz attribute that happy environment to Crowe and Cruise and their passion for the project.

CRUISE romances Cruz (left) and Diaz in "Vanilla Sky."

Delicious gift suggestions

WORD OF MOUTH

Sandy Daza

IT'S panic time once again. "What will I give my boss, the parents of my girlfriend or Kulapita who just sent a fruit cake? I have to impress them." Here are some suggestions—highly recommended:

Chocoholic's dream

1. Chocolate Velvet—Cake Lady. Best chocolate cake con mousse in the world. A chocoholic's dream. Tel. 893-7537.

2. Ensaymada—Mrs. Cunanan. Tel. 631-0798. Small and mean.

3. Bibingkang malagkit or biko—Best in the Philippines—perfect for *balikbayans*. Tel. 896-5543

4. Rum Cake—Sandy Romualdez' version—so far, the best I've tried. Tel. 727-5013.

5. Food For the Gods—Also a killer—best I've ever tried. Call Mara de la Rama 0917-811 6272 or fax 635-3327.

6. Sinful brownies *na tunay*—Undeniably the runaway—Nancy Reyes-Lumen with her trumpet musician husband Bobby. Tel. 810-8838, 812-8981.

7. Empanada—Simple, *masarap*—Cris Ongpaoco. Tel. 920-7282, 435-6952.

8. Apple Pie—Tina Tamesis' Apple Tree. Tel. 727-5324. She has outlets at Robinsons Galleria and Glorietta 4 Fast Food.

9. Martha's Cakes—Most beautifully decorated and with delicious icing, Children Theme cakes. Tel. 809-3659, 829-1314.

10. Pecan Pie and Cinnamon rolls—"*Pinaka*"—Jack and Icee Colet. Tel. 631-4221.

11. Pecan Pie, ditto—Milet Soberano. Tel 929-0190.

If you recycle your gifts, make sure you remove the card

12. Heny Sison—Her name says it all—Pied Piper of the sweet tooth. Tel. 726-5316 or 737-5316.

13. Mini Siopao—Tel. 631-3450.

14. Tita Paring Suman Latik—all over the malls (Mega, Shangri-La, etc.).

Chicken nuggets

15. Belcap—The best chicken nuggets and frozen fish fillet. Tel. 922-6262.

16. Brun Butter Cake—Still the best in Manila. Tel. 810-7529.

17. Almon ruka—Philippine made—*sarap*! Ana Lorenzana de Ocampo. Tel 809-1410, 809-1409.

18. Gela's Kitchen—Best mango bars and fudge brownies—*Iba at saksakan ng sarap*. Tel. 852-5814, 852-6045.

19. Lechon Cebu—Call Cebu and make arrangements with Rico—Rico's Lechon—Have a different Christmas party. Order the best tasting *lechon* in the islands. Pick it up at the airport for the evening party. Stays crunchy. P500 freight—Call Rico and make arrangements. Tel. (032) 344-0119, 0917-407 2033.

20. Catering—Chef Rox-Tel. 0917-538 3284, simple *at masarap* also Call Penny-Tel. 729-2818 or 0919-327 1723.

21. Happy Eating Cookbook by Sandy Daza—great gift for food lovers or new cooks venturing in the kitchen—Available at National Bookstore and my outlets. "Please *naman, o.*"

22. Pandan Cake and a variety of cheese cakes—Chef Buddy Trinidad—Pastry Chef par excellence. Most outstanding Pandan cake anyone can imagine. Tel. 812-6451

With this list, you have no excuse for missing out on a great and impressive gift this Holiday season. Reminder: If you recycle your gifts, make sure you remove the card or you don't give it to the one who sent it to you!

Happy eating! *sandydaza@hotmail.com*

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MICKEY MOUSE
Princess Heart Shaped Pillows
Disney Princess
Disney Mickey Mouse
Pooh Dinnerware Sets
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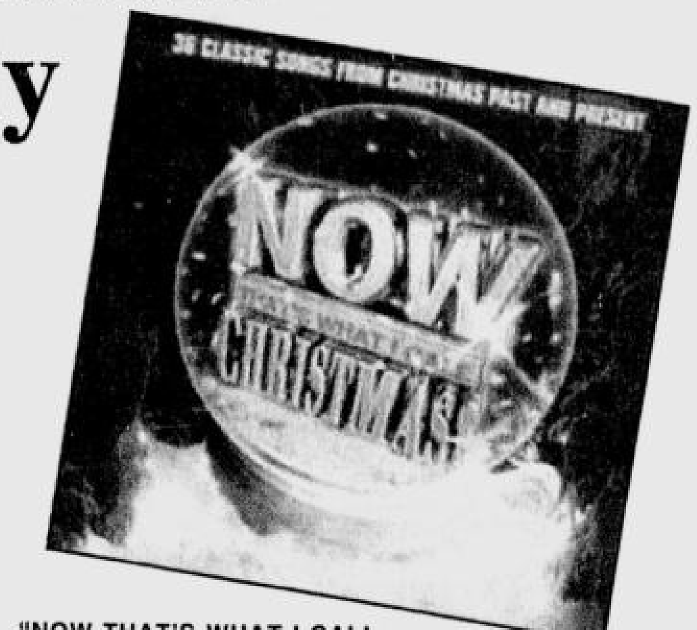
Streisand's second Christmas album is filled with joy and melancholy



"NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL CHRISTMAS." Billboards top Holiday album.

By Rito P. Asilo

THIRTY-FIVE years after 1966's "A Christmas Album," Barbra Streisand releases her second Christmas collection, "Christmas Memories," with an astonishing mix of talent and maturity.

Trademark humor

While the first album had her trademark humor, as demonstrated by her jazzy vocal romp in "Jingle Bells?, " the new 12-track compilation is a dour but propitious synthesis of holiday classics and new material.

The album starts with the classic, "I'll Be Home for Christmas," which was originally written for World War II soldiers who longed, during Christmas, for the loved ones they left back home. It has a poignant intro and a beautiful harmonica solo by jazz luminary, David Foster.

Streisand is quick to add that she completed this album *before* the Sept. 11 bombings. The album operates not only on bittersweet nostalgia but also on a mature perspective that takes issues of loss and acceptance into consideration.

The fusion of celebration, nostalgia and melancholy comes off well.

We have always liked Alan and Marilyn Bergman's sweeping lyrics, and, for years, have loved their "A Christmas Love Song," the couple's collaboration with Johnny Mandel. And we were only too happy to find it in this compilation, getting a unique Streisand reworking. They also wrote the title track, "Christmas Memories."

Christmas Memories

"CHRISTMAS MEMORIES." Different mood.

Artistry

Streisand praises the artistry of Frank Loesser's "What Are You Doing New Year's Eve?," ("The words, the sounds just fall on the right notes," she gushes), but we found the romantic and cinematic tone of "Snowbound" more appealing.

It was like listening to a single violin crying strains of Henry Mancini's "Moon River" while Audrey Hepburn's character, Holly, contemplates her life in "Breakfast at Tiffany's."

We count David Foster's "Grown-Up Christmas List" among our top contemporary holiday tunes (along with Harry Connick Jr.'s "This Christmas," Donny Osmond's "All Alone on Christmas Eve," Michael Bolton's "Love is the Reason," among others.) but haven't find anything new in Streisand's version.

For once, Barbra doesn't come up with a better version of the original (Amy Grant's). Well, Natalie Cole's maybe?

But the lyrics still hit straight to the heart: "*Do you remember me?/ I sat upon your knees/ I wrote to you my childhood fantasies/ Well, I'm all grown-up now but still need help somehow/ I'm not a child but my heart still can dream:*

"*No more lives torn apart, and wars would never start, and time would heal all hearts. Every man will have a friend, and right will always win, and love would never end/ This is my grown-up Christmas list...*" Very politically correct, huh?

In general, however, we don't look for unusual interpretations (like jazzed up versions, or bluesy vocal arrangements) of traditional fare, as long as they are sung well.

Most upbeat cut

Perhaps, the most upbeat cut in the collection is "It Must Have Been the Mistletoe." But even that doesn't come close to the frolicsome fun of "Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow" or "Winter Wonderland."

A curious addition to the list is Stephen Sondheim's haunting musical soliloquy, "I Remember," culled from the 1966 TV musical, "Evening Primrose." This song was not even a Christmas song, but Barbra convinced the composer to add a new opening line. Interestingly, Barbra's first album also contained the non-Christmas tune, "My Favorite Things," from "The Sound of Music," which has since found itself in other Christmas albums.

Another interesting cut is her version of Schubert's "Ave Maria," beautiful and timeless like the 59-year-old singer herself. What makes this even more fascinating is the fact that the first album also has an "Ave Maria"—Gounod's.

This latest album erases the time that separates the old songs (like the Johnny Mathis original, "One God," whose message is timely: No matter what God you may pray to, Love is the basis of all religion) from the new (the perfunctory "Christmas Lullaby"), as Streisand always manages to do.

But of the new songs in the album, the most subtly plaintive number is Dean Pitchford and Tom Snow's "Closer," which is about losing someone you love, and about wanting to be closer to that special someone on Christmas.

Emotional content

The emotional content of the poetry and melody is reminiscent of the bittersweet longing that was described in Donna Lewis musical effigy, "Another World."

"Closer" whispers: "*...As close as today is to tomorrow, at midnight they can finally touch/ 'Cause every minute brings them that much closer/ Closer/ So on this silent night I call your name and suddenly all time and space between us disappear/ I see your face in firelight/ I hold you close in memory/ And even though I know you're gone, I know you're here...*"

In Billboard's Top Holiday Album charts, Streisand's newest collection is at No. 3, after the two-CD. various artist, 36-song set, "Now That's What I Call Christmas!" and Mannheim Steamroller's "Christmas Extraordinaire." But as far as longevity is concerned, you want to take a guess who will stay at the top?

"Christmas Memories" may exude a different mood from Barbra's "A Christmas Album," which had 10 songs, (including "The Christmas Song," "White Christmas," "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas," "Silent Night," "O Little Town of Bethlehem," the soulful "I Wonder as I Wander," and her version of "The Lord's Prayer"), but the differing tones of the two albums complement each other in creating special memories for listeners. It is something that only the magic of Christmas, and Barbra Streisand's timeless voice, can accomplish.

So, you *really* want to be a millionaire?

OPRAH. Advice from the author of "Ordinary People, Extraordinary Wealth."

By Nestor U. Torre

THE POPULAR quiz show, "Who Wants to Be A Millionaire?" promises big cash prizes—but contestants get to win them only if they know a lot of trivia, think quick on their feet, keep their cool, and are blessed with good fortune. Thus far, after one year on the tube, the show has produced only one millionaire.

Practical tips

For more viewers to actually end up with a million bucks each, they should watch the "Oprah" show. From time to time, Ms Winfrey's weeknight program gives practical tips for "ordinary" people to make big money, save a bigger chunk of it, and thus make their savings make even more money for them.

Last week, for instance, Oprah had for her guest the author of the new book, "Ordinary People, Extraordinary Wealth," and he shared "little ways to end up with big savings." Instructively, not one of them involved joining a quiz program. Pencils and paper ready?":

- Live within your means. Don't try to keep up with the Joneses—they're probably poorer than you are because they spend all their money trying to *look* rich!
- Pay for your purchases and utilities in cash.
- Keep a detailed record of your expenses.
- Stop spending your coins. At the end of each day, collect all the coins in your pocket and save them. After some years, they'll add up to a nice, big pile.

Time deposit

- Cancel your cable TV subscription. You don't really need all those channels in Chinese, Russian, Japanese and Serbo-Croatian, do you? At the end of the year, your savings from this item alone will add up to thousands of bucks, and if you keep investing that amount or putting it in time deposit, it will grow steadily through the years.
- Take your lunch to work. Buying food in restaurants can be expensive, and additional expenses are what you want to do without.
- Limit your subscriptions to newspapers and magazines. One or two papers would be fine.
- Increase your insurance deductibles.
- Set up automatic bill payments so you save on stamps and other extra charges.
- Stop or reduce your dependence on ATMs, because they encourage you to spend, spend, spend! Ditto for credit cards.
- Buy less soda and junk food.
- Know the difference between *need* and *want*—and buy only what you *really* need.

Appearances

- Simplify your life, don't get so hung up on appearances, don't get bogged down by excess, and don't care so much about what other people say or think about you and your status in life!
- Don't leave your house with more than 50 bucks in your pocket. That way, you won't have anything to spend on unnecessary things.
- No impulse buying!
- When you get your hands on some money, pay yourself first.
- Look into investments. If you don't know anything about this, go out of your way to learn. But make sure you learn from really knowledgeable people, not from slick, smooth-talking speculators.
- Time is everything. Use it well.
- Make sure you take good care of your body. Health *is* wealth.
- Don't get into debt. Live *beneath* your means!

Veracity

Aside from the author of the how-to book, Oprah also invited "ordinary" people who had in fact become extraordinarily wealthy. They vouched for the veracity of the book's tips, and pointed to the proof in their own lives.

For example, and "ordinary" teacher had over a million dollars in the bank just because she was frugal and knew how to make her savings make as much additional money as possible for her.

Another wealthy guest gave viewers this additional advice: "Keep putting something aside everyday, then *don't touch your savings,* so they will compound through the years." Wise advice for millionaires-in-the-making like—us!

YOUR WEEKLY TV GUIDE FROM DEC. 15 – DEC. 21

CH	2	4	5	7	9	13	23	29	E!/31
SAT	5:30 Magandang Gabi, Bayan 7:00 Arriba, Arriba 8:00 Mary D' Potter 9:00 Da Pilya en Da Pilot 10:00 Kakasa Ka Ba? 10:30 Sapul Kayo Dyan 11:00 "F" 11:30 Sports Unlimited	6:00 Auto Review 6:30 Uncut 7:00 Saturday Primetime Special 9:00 The Bodyguards 10:00 Explore with Mike 11:00 Auto Focus 11:30 Fox News	6:30 Wing Commander 7:00 Sailormoon Super S 7:30 Wheel of Fortune 8:00 Celebrity Feud 8:30 Wow Mali! 9:30 Eezy Dancing 10:30 Saturday Night Specials *Fireball Jack*	5:30 Imbestigador 6:30 Korek na Korek Ka Dyan 7:00 Idol Ko Si Kap 8:00 Kakabakaba 9:00 Pinoy Blockbuster 11:00 Master Showman Presents	6:00 Star Trek 7:00 Special Unit II 8:00 Strange World 9:00 Saturday Night Playhouse *Once Again, It's Christmas* 11:00 PGMA	8:00 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 9:00 Kagat Ng Dilim 11:00 IBC Elorde	6:00 Digital Tour 6:30 G2 Living 7:00 Explorer 7:30 Early Edition 8:30 Gilmore Girls 9:30 Studio 23 Presents 12:00 MYX Sampler	3:00 Q Show Case 7:00 Xclusive Cinema Special 9:00 Oras ng Katotohanan 9:30 Armor of God 10:00 Oh Tokyo 11:00 Pinoy Wrestling	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! Coming Attractions 7:00 Celebrity Profile *Pamela Anderson* 8:00 E! True Hollywood Story 9:00 Side A: Certified Platinum 9:30 The Corrs on E! (Live in Mla.) 10:00 David Letterman 11:00 Web Awards on E! 11:30 Extreme Close Up
SUN	5:30 Sharon 7:00 Digimon 7:30 Wansapanataym 9:00 Pinoy Exposed 9:30 ABS-CBN Presents 11:30 Off The Record 12:00 The Weekend News	3:00 MBA 8:00 Street Legal 9:00 Sunday's Big Showdown 11:00 Business & Leisure 11:30 Fox News	6:00 Zorro 6:30 Guyferd 7:00 Price is Right 8:00 Sing-Galing 9:00 The Big Night *Emmy Awards 2001 Part 2* 11:00 Sentinel	5:30 Partners Mel and Jay 7:00 Pokemon 7:30 Sinerama 9:30 Sunday Night Box Office 11:30 Che-Che Lazaro Presents	6:00 Entertainment This Weekend 7:00 Ripley's Believe It or Not 8:00 Where In Time Is Carmen San Diego 8:30 Kids Say the Darndest Thing 9:00 Sunday's Big Event *Babes In Toyland* 11:00 Sunday Report 11:30 Ugnayan	4:00 PBA Game 1 6:30 PBA Game 2 8:30 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 9:30 Sinemaks 11:30 El Shaddai	6:00 Starship Troopers 6:30 Rugrats 7:00 Batman Beyond 7:30 Futurama 8:00 Bette 8:30 Veronica's Closet 9:00 Will & Grace 9:30 Murder in Smalltown X 10:30 Twilight Zone 11:00 News Central	5:00 Quartermaster Window Shop 7:00 Sunday Mini-Series 8:00 Oh Tokyo 9:00 Sunday Night Movies 11:00 Bikini Open	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! Coming Attractions 7:00 An Affair to Remember 9:00 The 2001 Asian Television Awards 11:00 60 Minutes
MON	6:00 TV Patrol 7:00 Game K N B? 8:30 Pangako sa 'Yo 9:00 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:30 Sa Puso Ko, Iingatan Ka 10:00 FPJ Action Cinema 11:00 Headlines 11:30 The Correspondents	5:00 Metro TV 6:00 Value Vision 7:00 Sigaw 8:00 Tele-Dyaryo 10:00 Speed 11:00 Unlimited Diving	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 F 7:00 Mahha Go Go Go 7:30 Wheel Of Fortune 8:00 Family Feud 8:30 Touched By An Angel 9:30 Trabaho Lang 10:00 The Big News 10:30 High Tide	6:00 Saksi 6:30 DragonballZ 7:00 Sorcerer Hunter 7:30 Sana ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:00 Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin 8:30 Monica Brava 9:00 GMA's Best 11:00 Front Page 11:30 I-Witness	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Sin Ti 6:30 Real TV 7:00 Becker 7:30 Arliss 8:00 World's Most Amazing Videos 9:00 The X-Files 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Entertainment Tonight 11:00 Sex & The City	5:30 Viva Music Channel 6:30 Viva Box Office 8:30 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 9:30 The Weakest Link 10:30 Por Un Beso 11:00 Ronda Trese 11:30 Good Take	6:00 Beat UK 7:00 Primetime Classics 7:30 The Nanny 8:00 Dark Angel 9:00 Charmed 10:00 News Central 10:30 Points of View 11:30 Jenny Jones 12:00 MYX Sampler	4:30 Quartermaster 6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Q Showcase 9:00 Ang Dating Daan 10:00 Q Showcase	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! News Daily 7:00 In Focus *Ice Skating* 8:00 Mysteries and Scandals - 8:30 Search Party 9:00 Fashion Emergency 9:30 E! News Daily 10:00 60 Minutes 11:00 Wild On *Bermuda Triangle* 12:00 Talk Soup
TUE	6:00 TV Patrol 7:00 Game K N B? 8:30 Pangako sa 'Yo 9:00 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:30 Sa Puso Ko, Iingatan Ka 10:00 Oka Tokat 10:30 Kaballikat 11:00 Headlines 11:30 Mission X	5:00 Value Vision 6:00 Fox News 8:00 Tele-Dyaryo 10:00 Pulsong Masa 11:00 Fox News	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 Dragon League 7:00 2 Years Vacation w/ Dinosaurs 7:30 Wheel of Fortune 8:00 Family Feud 8:30 E.R. 9:30 Urban Doktor 10:00 The Big News 10:30 FX The Series	6:00 Saksi 6:30 DragonballZ 7:00 Sorcerer Hunter 7:30 Sana ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:00 Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin 8:30 Monica Brava 9:00 Kool Ka Lang 10:00 Kasangga 11:00 Front Page 11:30 The Probe Team	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Sin Ti 6:30 Real TV 7:00 Ed 8:00 Ally McBeal 9:00 The Practice 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Entertainment Tonight 11:30 The Extremist	6:30 Viva Box Office 8:30 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 9:30 The Weakest Link 10:30 Por Un Beso 11:00 Ronda Trese 11:30 Good Take	6:00 Later with Jools 7:00 Priemtime Classics 7:30 Popular 8:30 The Others 9:30 Just Shoot Me 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah 11:30 Zine 12:00 MYX Sampler	4:30 Quartermaster 6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Ang Dating Daan (Live)	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! News Daily 7:00 Celebrity Profile 8:00 E! True Hollywood Story 9:00 Celebrity Homes 9:30 E! News Daily 10:00 David Letterman 11:00 Uncut *Winona Ryder* 11:30 Extreme Close Up 12:00 Talk Soup
WED	6:00 TV Patrol 7:00 Game K N B? 8:30 Pangako sa 'Yo 9:00 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:30 Sa Puso Ko, Iingatan Ka 10:00 Whattamen 10:30 Your Honor 11:00 Headlines 11:30 ISYU 101	4:00 MBA 8:00 Tele-Dyaryo 10:00 Paco Park Presents 11:00 Fox News	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 Pygmalio 7:00 Time Quest 7:30 Wheel of Fortune 8:00 Family Feud 8:30 Friends 9:00 That '70s Show 9:30 Planet X 10:00 The Big News 10:30 Philippines Most Wanted	6:00 Saksi 6:30 DragonballZ 7:00 Sorcerer Hunter 7:30 Sana ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:00 Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin 8:30 Monica Brava 9:00 Beh Bote Nga 10:00 Larawan 11:00 Front Page 11:30 Jessica Soho Reports	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Sin Ti 6:30 Real TV 7:00 Level 9 8:00 Bugs Bunny looney Xmas 8:30 Robbie, The Raindeer 9:00 AHV Unwrapped for the Holidays 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Entertainment Tonight 11:00 Wrestling	5:00 PBA Game 1 7:30 PBA Game 2 9:30 The Weakest Link 10:30 Por Un Beso 11:00 Ronda Trese 11:30 Good Take	6:00 New Music 6:30 Soundcheck 7:00 Priemtime Classics 7:30 Scariest Places 8:30 Game Plan 9:00 The District 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah	4:30 Quartermaster 6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Q Showcase 9:00 Ang Dating Daan 10:00 Q Showcase	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! News Daily 7:00 In Focus *Theme Parks Ago-go* 8:00 Mysteries And Scandals 8:30 Search Party 9:00 Fashion Emergency 9:30 E! News Daily 10:00 David Letterman 11:00 Wild On *Tropics* 12:00 Talk Soup
THU	6:00 TV Patrol 7:00 Game K N B? 8:30 Pangako sa 'Yo 9:00 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:30 Sa Puso Ko, Iingatan Ka 10:00 Attagirl 10:30 Maalaala Mo Kaya 11:00 Headlines 11:30 Pipol	4:00 Shop @ Home 5:00 Value Vision 6:00 Fox News 8:00 Tele-Dyaryo 10:00 Concert At The Park 11:00 Fora Medica	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 Shulato 7:00 Fancy Lala 7:30 Wheel of Fortune 8:00 Family Feud 8:30 Guinnes World Records 9:30 The Exchange 10:00 The Big News 10:30 By Request *Bond In Asia*	6:00 Saksi 6:30 DragonballZ 7:00 Sorcerer Hunter 7:30 Sana ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:00 Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin 8:30 Monica Brava 9:00 Daddy Di Do Du 10:00 Sa Dako Pa Roon 11:00 Front Page 11:30 Debate with Mare at Pare	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Sin Ti 6:30 Real TV 7:00 Clueless 8:00 Felicity 9:00 Once and Again 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Entertainment Tonight 11:30 48 Hours	6:30 Viva Box Office 8:30 Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? 9:30 The Weakest Link 10:30 Por Un Beso 11:00 Ronda Trese 11:30 Good Take	6:00 Behind The Music 7:00 Priemtime Classics 7:30 Cineplex 23 9:30 Guide to Urban Living 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah 11:30 Travel Time 12:00 MYX Sampler	4:30 Quartermaster 6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Q Showcase 9:00 Ang Dating Daan 10:00 Q Showcase	6:00 E! News Daily 7:00 Celebrity Profile *Kevin Bacon* 8:00 E! True Hollywood Story 9:00 Celebrity Homes 9:30 E! News Daily 10:30 David Letterman 11:30 Extreme Close Up *Hector Elizondo* 12:00 Talk Soup
FRI	6:00 TV Patrol 7:00 Game K N B? 8:30 Pangako sa 'Yo 9:00 Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan 9:30 Sa Puso Ko, Iingatan Ka 10:00 Star Cinema Presents 11:00 Headlines 11:30 True Crime	4:00 MBA 8:00 Tele-Dyaryo 10:00 Patrol 117 11:00 Fox News	6:00 Balitang-Balita 6:30 Lazer Patrol 7:00 Starcom 7:30 Wheel Of Fortune 8:00 Family Feud 8:30 Ispup 9:30 On-Air 10:00 The Big News 10:30 Friday Box Office *The Punisher*	6:00 Saksi 6:30 DragonballZ 7:00 Sorcerer Hunter 7:30 Sana ay Ikaw Na Nga 8:00 Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin 8:30 Monica Brava 9:00 Bubble Gang 10:00 GMA Love Stories 11:00 Front Page 11:30 Emergency	5:30 Arangkada Xtra Balita 6:00 Sin Ti 6:30 Real TV 7:00 That's Life 8:00 TV Guide Look at Christmas 9:00 Largo 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 TV Greats on Friday *Regine Christmas Special 1*	5:00 PBA Game 1 7:30 PBA Game 2 9:30 The Weakest Link 10:30 Por Un Beso 11:00 Ronda Trese 11:30 Good Take	6:00 Halo-Halo 7:00 Priemtime CLassics 7:30 Survivor: Africa 8:30 Mortal Combat 9:30 Oh Grow Up! 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah 11:30 Jenny Jones 12:30 MYX Sampler	4:30 Quartermaster 6:30 Q Showcase 7:30 Oras ng Katotohanan 8:00 Ang Dating Daan (Live)	6:00 CBS Evening News 6:30 E! News Daily 7:00 InFocus 8:00 Mysteries & Scandals 8:30 Search Party 9:00 Fashion Emergency 9:30 E! News Daily 10:00 David Letterman 11:00 Wild On *Ice* 12:00 Talk Soup

'Rated Apo' goes onstage on Dec. 18

BY EDMUND L. SICAM

THE APO Hiking Society, dubbed as the "Godfathers of Pinoy Pop," is back with a Christmas concert, "Rated Apo," on Dec. 18 at Onstage Greenbelt. With the recent success of their latest album, "Apo…Banda Rito," the APO shows no signs of stopping.

Third member

The Apo are otherwise known as Jim, Danny and Boboy. Jim is the one with the looks, Danny has the dark complexion and Boboy is—"I'm the smallest in the group." He quickly adds, "We kiddingly refer to me as the third member of the group. Not the first, not the second, but the third," he says, laughing.

Boboy has long been standing in the shadows of Jim and Danny, the more prominent members of the APO. "Jim wrote the historical, heroic songs. Danny wrote the classic Tagalog songs *naman*. And Boboy…wrote some songs also!" jokes Boboy, with perfect timing. Boboy can crack numerous jokes pitting himself as the underdog. This is usually the stuff that makes up their spiels. "*Sa totoo naman talaga*, Jim has written about 60 to 70 percent of the songs of Apo. Danny would have written about 35 percent. *Natatawa* nga ako when we're doing an album, *parang* I have to make a quota. I have to complete my one song in the album!"

The underrated APO, Boboy can definitely hold his own against the two, but he chooses to let them take centerstage. "I don't think I even tried to assert myself. What I learned was to make myself shine as I stood in the background."

Boboy says that his pride in the group is that he is what he calls "the executor." "You create something, I'll execute it!" he says with pride. "*Iyon* ang feeling *ko na* major contribution *ko*—the way I execute things, the gags onstage, the humor, the timing and sometimes a little choreography." (Potshot at Jim, who cannot dance to save himself).

Leisurely pace

At present, Boboy says he lives life at a very leisurely pace. Among the three, Boboy is the one with the most free time. Danny has his businesses (PIDRO shirts and consultancies), Jim has his photography studio and teaches at the Ateneo. "Sometimes I feel, *nakakahiya ako. Kasi pag wala akong ginagawa*, feeling *ko, ganito ba talaga ang buhay na ito?*" he muses.

But then, things started to change around a month ago. "It's funny. We thought we slowed down. But then we started launching this album, *sabi nga ng manager namin*, '*Ang daming tumatawag ha!* They want us to do shows!'"

This led to a meeting among the members of the APO. In the past, the three had more or less the same schedules, since most of their work was APO-related. The issue was, with all the activities that each individual has lined up at present, would it be possible to find some common time among the three?

"So we all sat down and said, '*Ikaw ba*, what do you want? Do you want to kill the performing APO? Or you want it to fade away?' Recently, it's been understood, if there's a schedule, we'll do it. Basically, we're still doing it. *Wala lang kami sa* TV."

Boboy says that he has finally accepted that he is an artist. "I want to be a performer. I'm still going after my acting. That's what I really want to do. I don't mind getting back to television. I'm really a—I don't know what you call it—a media person. I like television."

If there is one thing that sets Boboy apart from his two friends, it is that he has made his mark in television. Boboy has been a regular mainstay and guest on several television shows, among them, "Mr. Kupido" and "E Kasi Babae." Quite notably, these were ventures he did by himself—apart from Jim and Danny.

In the '70s, he did some movies with Mike de Leon, which he says he found very interesting. He mentions that he was nominated for an Urian Award for one of these films. "*Noon parang hiyang-hiya ako na* who am I? On hindsight, I think, '*Oo nga!*' That's how I feel!"

Real performer

"*Ganito ang na*-realize *ko*. After all these years, of the three of us, I'm the real performer. I love performing. When I look back now, I remember when I was a kid, *di ba lahat naman tayo dumadaan doon*—'*Uy, sasayaw si* Boboy, *kakanta!*' And I would perform! I remember that distinctly. I was in grade school. So I guess *ganoon*."

He is especially proud that he was part of a play by Nick Joaquin last year. He shares his exhilaration over his being part of the cast. "To me, that was really something! You know, different venue, different medium, for me. I mean, the last time I did plays, I was in kindergarten! *Kay* Fr. Reuter *pa*!"

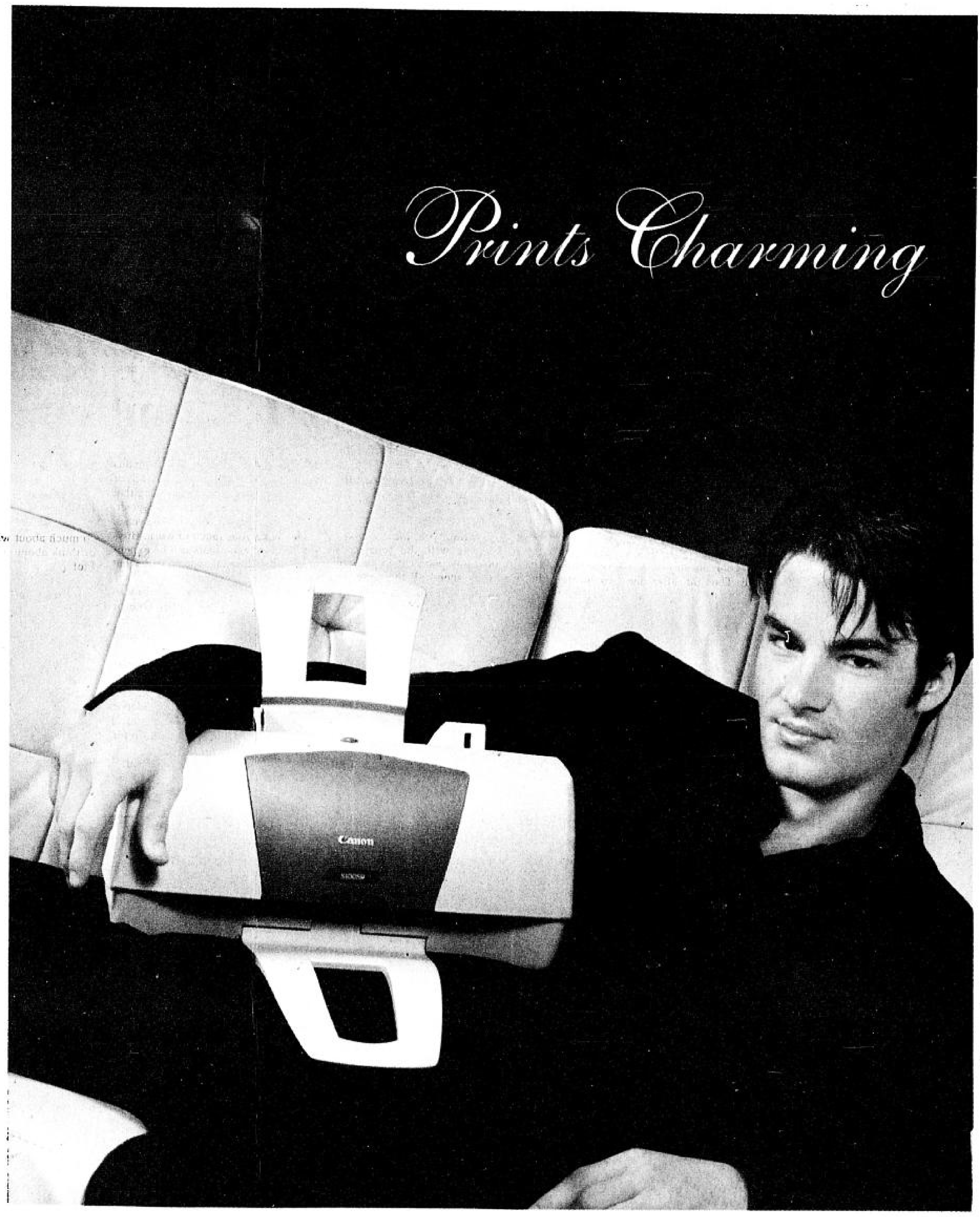
He recalls how intimidated he felt being part of a group of performers who were stage veterans. "I remember Tessie Tomas *sa* first reading *pa lang namin*. After the reading, *tumingin si* Tessie *sa akin*, 'Boboy, *sigurado ka bang gusto mo ito?*' *Lalo akong tinakot!* You know I had sleepless nights!" Then he was told that his alternate was going to be Subas Herrero. "*Ha? Teka…medyo mahirap yata ito*…But I said, OK! Let's do it! To me, it was a challenge—totally." But all in all, he had a wonderful time and enjoyed every minute of it.

Boboy says he has not yet seriously considered going solo when it comes to singing. He recounts a time when he hosted a live program on his own. He says that the audience was shouting, asking him to render a song number. He told the audience, "I don't sing!" Then he had a little dialogue with himself, "What do you mean you don't sing?—Yeah, but not alone.—*Ano*, you're a singer, but you don't sing?" So he hints that the thought is in his mind and he may just act on it someday. Just recently, Boboy says that he and Danny were at a golf tournament. People were asking them, "Where's Jim?" They answered, "He doesn't play golf. That's why he refused to come here." And people asked him and Danny to sing. "We sang! We sang 'Batang-bata.' We sang our songs. *Ganoon naman iyon e*." He says that it went quite well even if Jim was not around to complete the trio.

Boboy recalls that it actually happened that during a concert, Jim was too sick to perform. It was a Valentine concert no less and Jim was bedridden. The tickets were all sold. The audience was there, waiting to be entertained. "We just put up a mike stand beside us. We started doing the spiels. So we did it! We even asked the audience if they wanted us to continue or not." Of course, the show went on.

And the show will go on—of course, with all three of the APO present—on Dec. 18. The Apo Hiking Society will have a Christmas concert entitled, "Rated Apo" at the Onstage Greenbelt, Ayala Center, Makati at 9 p.m. See it and lookout for Boboy. You can't miss him—he's the third Apo!

DANNY, Boboy and Jim, dubbed as the "Godfathers of Pinoy Pop."



You never forget your first love: childish were its beginnings based on looks alone - albeit conspicuously handsome ones. How quickly it matured, as so many cherished pictures serve to remind. Long considered words were changed and changed again, then printed. Just to be crumpled and started anew. The way, even today, they make you smile - or cry - from their familiar place on the page. How bold they still appear. Life, so colourful, so bright and perfect was revealed to you in a way you'd never imagined. This Canon is terribly stylish, slim and extremely potent; its faithful heart graces you with 5ppm monochrome & 2ppm colour at 720 x360 dpi. You'll never forget your first: the intelligent - the downright sexy - Canon S100SP bubble jet printer.

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Columbia's top 13 movies for 2002

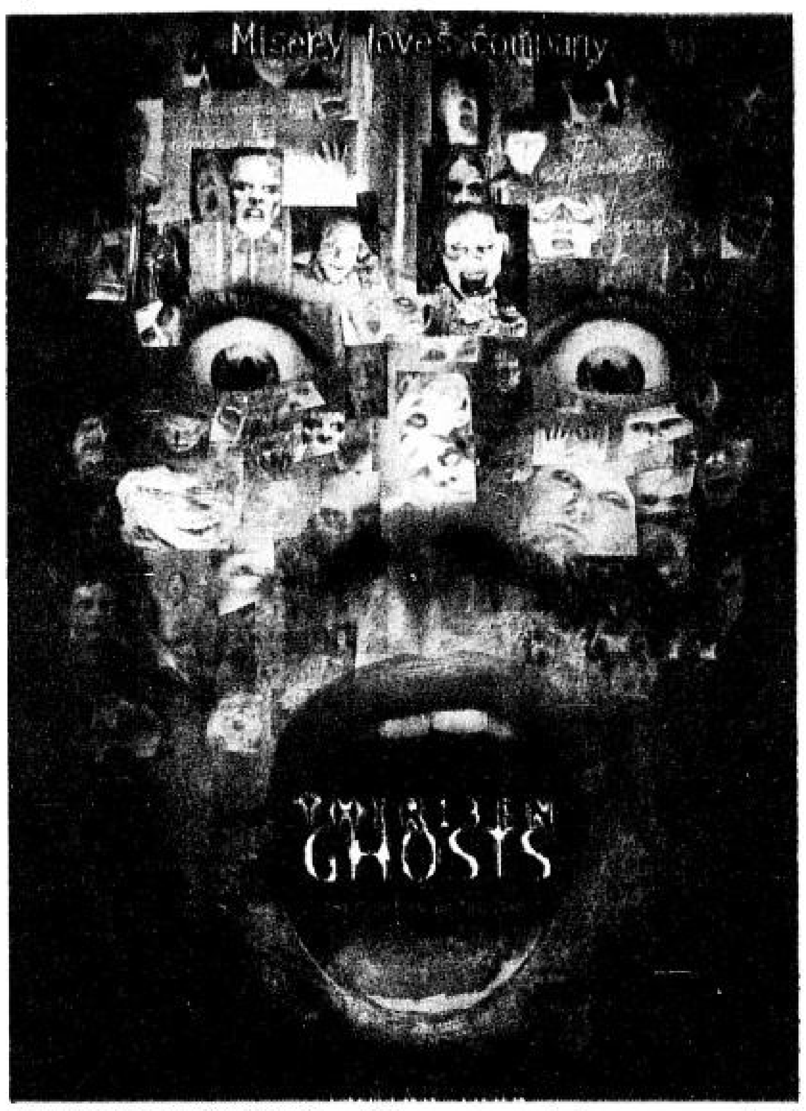
FRESH from another successful year—powered by global megahits like "Vertical Limit, "The 6th Day," "Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within," "America's Sweethearts" and "The One"—Columbia Pictures unveils its Top 13 movies for 2002. They star Will Smith, Cameron Diaz, Jodie Foster, Drew Barrymore Josh Harnett, Ewan MacGregor and a web-spinning hero everyone's dying to see:

1. "Thirteen Ghosts." The Kriticos family (led by Shannon Elizabeth) inherits a spectacular old house from an eccentric uncle. There's just one problem: the house seems to have a dangerous agenda all its own. Trapped in its new home by strangely shifting walls, the family encounters powerful and vengeful entities that threaten to annihilate anyone in their path.

2. "Spider-Man." One of the potential blockbusters of 2002, this sci-fi adventure finds young student Peter Parker (Tobey Maguire) infected by a radiation-sprayed spider's bite—miraculously granting him incredible spider-like abilities.

Peter will find out that there's a thin line between an ordinary man and an extraordinary hero, and he'll have to be the one to cross it. Sam Raimi directs.

3. "Men in Black 2." The wildly anticipated sequel to the 1997 blockbuster. Agents J and K (Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones) are back for more battles with alien rabble-rousers (led by Famke Janssen), who take the form of estrogen-charged extraterrestrials.



"THIRTEEN GHOSTS." The old house seems to have an agenda all its own.

BLACK HAWK DOWN

RIDLEY Scott's film stars Ewan MacGregor.

4. "Black Hawk Down." Directed by Ridley Scott ("Gladiator," "Hannibal"), this spectacular war film takes place in 1993 when the US sent special forces into Somalia to destabilize the government and bring humanitarian aid to the starving population.

But an unexpected attack by Somalian forces compels US soldiers to defend themselves and regain their balance while enduring heavy gunfire. Josh Hartnett ("Pearl Harbor) and Ewan MacGregor (:Moulin Rouge") lead the cast.

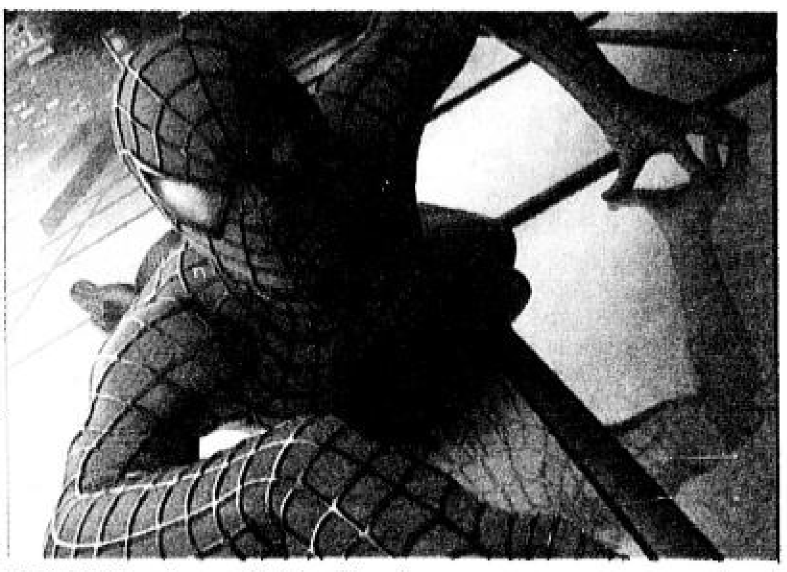
5. "Rollerball." A futuristic thriller from director John McTiernan ("Die Hard"). "Rollerball" is a deadly sport that combines roller derby and basketball that packs arenas around the world. A global viewership bets and roots for the star players (Chris Klein, LL Cool J & Rebecca Romijn-Stamos), who skate and motorcycle past opponents to score.

Despite the danger of the game, the real threat lies in the team owner who sacrifices anything and anyone to maximize ratings. which are worth more to him than the final score.

6. "The Sweetest Thing." In this big-hearted comedy, a sexy clubhopper (Cameron Diaz) finds that she must educate herself on the correct etiquette of wooing a man when she finally meets her Mr. Right (Thomas Jane)—and has no idea what to do about it!

7. "The Panic Room." From the director of "Seven" and "Fight Club" comes this gripping thriller about a divorced woman (Jodie Foster) and her daughter, who are caught up in a cat-and-mouse game inside their New York apartment when three burglars look for a hidden cache of cash. Mother and daughter hide in the "panic room," a secret room designed for just such eventualities.

8. "Riding in Cars With Boys." Drew Barrymore plays a woman who had grand dreams as a teenager, only to find them derailed by her weakness for boys, which resulted in an accidental pregnancy. As she grows up and raises her son, she tries to come to terms with how her life has gone so far, while reluctantly discovering how to be a mother.



TOBEY Maguire as "Spider-Man."

9. "Not Another Teen Movie." This irreverent comedy shows no mercy as it skewers the conventions and cliches of the genre you hate to love. Join Janey Briggs, an aspiring artist who is outcast by her classmates for wearing glasses, a ponytail and paint-covered overalls; and Jake Wyler, the all-American football star who makes a foolish bet to turn Janey into a prom queen, in a risque romp with an assortment of twisted takes on classic teen movies.

10. "National Security." A white ex-cop (Steve Zahn) teams up with the African-American man (Martin Lawrence) he was falsely accused of cruelly beating to stop the people who are trying to kill them both.

11. "Master of Disguise." "Wayne's World's" Dana Carvey stars in this riotous comedy which is the story of the last in a long line of "masters of disguise," in a family that goes back past 2,000 years of European history.

12. "Evil Woman." Darren (Jason Biggs), Wayne (Steve Zahn) and J.D. (Jack Black) have been best friends since the fifth grade and have always stuck together. Now, enter Judith (Amanda Peet), a great-looking but cold-hearted and manipulative psychiatrist who digs her claws into sweet-natured Darren and snatches him from their friendship.

13. "The New Guy." After sealing his "uncool" reputation with an embarrassing ninth-grade accident, high school student DJ Qualls is expelled and winds up in jail. While incarcerated, his cellmate coaches him into changing his image into a "cool" kid.

Entertainment venues invigorate performing scene

By Jocelyn Valle

IT'S not the best of times but it's no excuse to stay home and feel sorry for yourself. Once in a while, it's good to go out and unwind. Although it's true that entertainment venues are business establishments that need to recoup their investment and earn profits, they also provide temporary relief from problems that can be personal, national or global.

Singer Cody Moreno believes that music is a great outlet, so he recommends going to nightspots that feature live bands or solo acts. He did that at the recent opening of ArKdia in Malate, not as a performer (because he was having a problem with his throat) but as a regular guy out to have fun.

Well-designed

We share Cody's observation that ArKdia is well designed, particularly the stage. Whether you're in the first or second floor of the three-story building (the third level is the roof deck), you can easily check out the venue's center of events, which, says HK.com Entertainment's head, Joseph Garcia, can be a concert, product/album launch or a fashion show.

Friends

Says ArKdia's friends, Jun Lim of MLA Architects: "It is designed to be a place of performance, where friends can gather and have a good time. By day, it caters to those who would like to have meetings, enjoy a quick lunch or maybe just have some coffee in a unique environment."

At night, a band performs nightly at ArKdia but special shows by popular performers are also staged regularly. During ArKdia's inauguration, there was a merry mix of entertainers: a boy band, a couple of show bands and comedienne Beverly Salviejo.

In the future, Garcia hopes that his company will be able to bring in foreign artists like Jennifer Lopez to the bar that he calls the ultimate venue. No wonder that Alemar's Booklight, which distributes eBookMan (a personal digital assis-

ENTERTAINMENT/p.E7

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'Citizen Kane' reissue turns harsh eye on Orson Welles

BY ANTHONY BREZNICAN

LOS ANGELES—Was "Citizen Kane" really . . . Orson Welles?

The director's classic 1941 film sullied media tycoon William Randolph Hearst's image, and 60 years later the DVD release does the same thing to Welles.

Two-disc set

Extra features on the two-disc set arriving in stores this week paint Welles as a talented but arrogant young artist handicapped by his incendiary first film.

In film critic Roger Ebert's audio commentary, he says Welles—not Hearst—is closest in character to the movie's tragic protagonist, whose deluded ambition plunged him from greatness into despair.

And in an interview, director Robert Wise, just in his mid-20s when he edited "Citizen Kane," characterized the movie as autobiographical for Welles, vaguely foretelling the filmmaker's rise and fall.

Wise, who later directed some 40 movies including "The Day the Earth Stood Still" and "The Sound of Music," said the young Welles resembled the young Charles Foster Kane, wielding his immense charm and wealth like a weapon.

Bombastic

"He was so bombastic, and so big and larger-than-life in those days. He was as close to a genius as anyone I'd ever met," said Wise, now 87. "He knew what he wanted and fought for it."

Wise recalled a defiantly charismatic speech the young Welles made to a group of Hollywood studio bosses who wanted to destroy every copy of "Citizen Kane" lest the industry incur the wrath of Hearst's newspapers.

"He had his case half-won before we even showed them the picture," Wise said.

In later years, Welles could barely persuade studios to finance his pictures and frequently had his control revoked before they were finished.

"I have wasted the greater part of my life looking for money and trying to get along, trying to make my work from this terribly expensive paint box, which is a movie," Welles said in a 1984 BBC interview, one year before his death at 70.

Welles biographer Peter Bogdanovich told The Associated Press that it's unfair to magnify Welles' early flaws and criticized aspects of the new edition of "Citizen Kane" that take aim at its creator.

"Anybody who is gifted has problems sometimes," said Bogdanovich, who delivers a more flattering commentary on the DVD. "A lot of people didn't like him because they knew he was smarter and more talented than they were."

Documentary

Included in the new DVD is "The Battle Over 'Citizen Kane,'" an Oscar-nominated 1995 documentary that chronicles Hearst's efforts to suppress the movie and the crippling effect that early success had on Welles.

WELLES. Subject to uncontrollable fits of rage, trashing restaurants and hotel rooms.

"When you do something that magnificent that young, what do you do for an encore?" said Thomas Lennon, the documentary producer. "People would see his later movies, like 'Othello' or 'The Lady From Shanghai,' and say, 'Well, it's good, but it's no 'Citizen Kane.'"

The documentary is an unflinching study of Welles, praising his genius but not shying from the young Broadway and radio star's sometimes icy disregard for others.

"I don't think Welles ever set out to be nice," Lennon said. "He was trying to do really big work."

On stage, Welles would place stage actors in danger, breaking their bones with unusual stunts and insisting on real knives—until he accidentally stabbed a co-star and nearly killed him.

During his famous 1938 radio broadcast of "War of the Worlds," Welles ignored warnings his show was causing pandemonium and then lied about it to authorities.

Legendary tirades

He was subject to uncontrollable fits of rage, trashing restaurants and hotel rooms. A scene in which Welles' character smashes apart a room in "Citizen Kane" was reportedly inspired by his own legendary tirades.

Bogdanovich said Welles' reputation will remain strong, even though some elements of the "Citizen Kane" DVD release may offer a negative image.

"He was nothing like that," Bogdanovich said. "Orson was generous and funny, with a laugh that would echo off the walls . . . He was also underappreciated. About six months before he died, he said, 'God, how they'll love me when I'm dead.' He was right." *AP*

Entertainment . . .

(From page E6)

tant, voice recorder, MP3 player, audio book player and eBook Reader) supported the event by raffling off a couple of units.

"It has entertainment features," says Alemar's Booklight's VP for sales and marketing, Cecille Cobarrubias, who used the screen name Shyr Valdez when she was still active in show business. "With it, you can hear your favorite songs and at the same time read the books you like."

Childhood dream

Garcia shares that opening a bar like ArKdia is a realization of his childhood dream. He loves music, and plays the piano and bass guitar while he enjoys singing in karaoke joints. He also owns a bar in Tokyo, Japan.

That explains why the sound and lighting systems at ArKdia is top-notch. It has the Tracer 4000, a multi-beam sky projector whose beam can be seen up to a 10-kilometer radius, and the Kaleido that lights up the building's façade in different colors every few seconds.

ARKDIA'S boy group Domain with Hidenori Kawasaki (in glasses).

GARCIA (right) with Regine Velasquez.

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SMART will only shoulder the expenses of the trip for a maximum of 5 persons per winning group. The prize is convertible to cash (P200,000.00).
7. Winners will be notified through a voice call, text message, and registered mail.
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9. Winners must present the winning raffle stub, notification letter, valid ID, and their SMART SIM cards. Winners of the trip to Singapore must also present birth certificates and passports.
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Thriving Spanish cinema set for a plot change

By Jess Smee

MADRID—With Spanish actors making it big in Hollywood, local film directors gaining international fame and cinema queues snaking around the block, Spain's silver screen is in a golden era.

Leading lights

But the Spanish film industry—whose leading lights have ranged from Luis Buñuel to Pedro Almodovar—is bracing for a new challenge when the government scraps a law which for decades has protected it from the roar and glitz of Hollywood.

Spain, the last European country with a so-called screen quota system, has decided to shelve the rule which forces cinemas to show one European film for every three non-European movies, which are usually US-made.

"Now it's time for Spanish cinema to show what it's really made of," said a culture ministry spokesman. But he admitted the industry would have its work cut out to compete internationally.

Spain's film industry has dug in its heels in opposition to the law. Under the legislation approved in July, the screen quota system will be scrapped within five years.

The average budget for a Spanish film is around 500 million pesetas ($2.57 million) while US blockbusters invest billions of pesetas in marketing alone.

But Spain's film business has never been in a better position to fight back, critics and industry insiders say.

Success stories

Among a growing list of success stories, superstars Penelope Cruz and Antonio Banderas have stormed the international stage and Oscar-winning director Almodovar has wowed both arthouse and commercial audiences with tales of love and desire.

Joining the limelight, actor Javier Bardem was nominated for an Oscar this year for his portrayal of a gay Cuban poet hounded by the Cuban government in "Before Night Falls."

"Spanish cinema is bigger and better than it has been for decades," said Eduardo Rodriguez Merchan, a history of cinema professor at Madrid's Complutense University.

"There's a wave of new directors and actors who seem to be connecting with a generation of young people bored with watching television," he said.

Among those making waves is Alejandro Almenebar, who made his first film Tesis (Thesis) aged just 22. Five years later, viewers and critics lauded "Abre los Ojos" (Open Your Eyes) a high-suspense story of a rich womanizer disfigured in a car accident caused by a former girlfriend.

English version

Now that film has been remade starring Penelope Cruz alongside US actor Tom Cruise. "Vanilla Sky," as the English version is called, made headlines even before its premiere, largely because the two stars began to date.

In Europe, Spaniards' appetite for films is second only to Iceland and national films are getting bigger audiences. Official figures show their share of the market stands at 15 percent, up from around six percent in the 1980s.

This looks good compared to the Netherlands, where just one percent of Dutch people watch home-grown productions, but lags behind France, where about one in every three films seen is nationally made, Rodriguez Merchan said.

Cinema chain owners have applauded the move which gives them the freedom to select films they think will be hits.

The Spanish film industry, however, is not impressed.

"How can Spanish directors compete with American super-productions?" asked Fernando Bejarano of Spain's Federation of Associations of Audiovisual Producers, echoing the indignation of many industry colleagues.

"Up and coming directors will have no way of making it big if Spanish films don't get to the screens. Cinemas must be forced to show European films because then audiences can decide what they want to see for themselves," he said.

Influence

The government—perhaps mindful of the influence irate cinema directors might have over millions of film viewers—has promised it will keep a close eye on how the industry is faring before actually cutting the quotas in 2006.

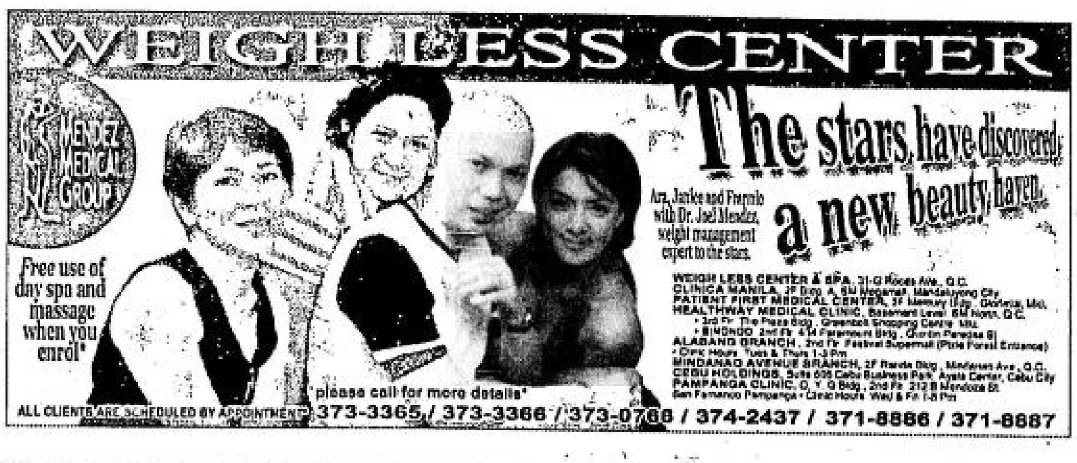
The quota law was created in the 1970s as Spain sought to revive its cinema after the strict censorship rules which snipped "immoral" parts of films during the nearly four-decade dictatorship of Francisco Franco, who died in 1975.

But smartly dressed Spaniards lining up for late-night showings at a central Madrid cinema say filmgoers are likely to stand by Spanish films regardless of the quota rule.

"Our films show typical Spaniards and have funny stories that every one can relate to. There's no way they will die out just because of a law change," said Juan Gutierrez, a student queuing outside the entrance to one of the cinemas lining the Gran Via avenue.

That said, the four out of five billboards above his head were for US movies and he admitted he was in line to see Hollywood's megabudget "Pearl Harbor." *Reuters*

SPANISH actors Antonio Banderas and Penelope Cruz are big names in Hollywood.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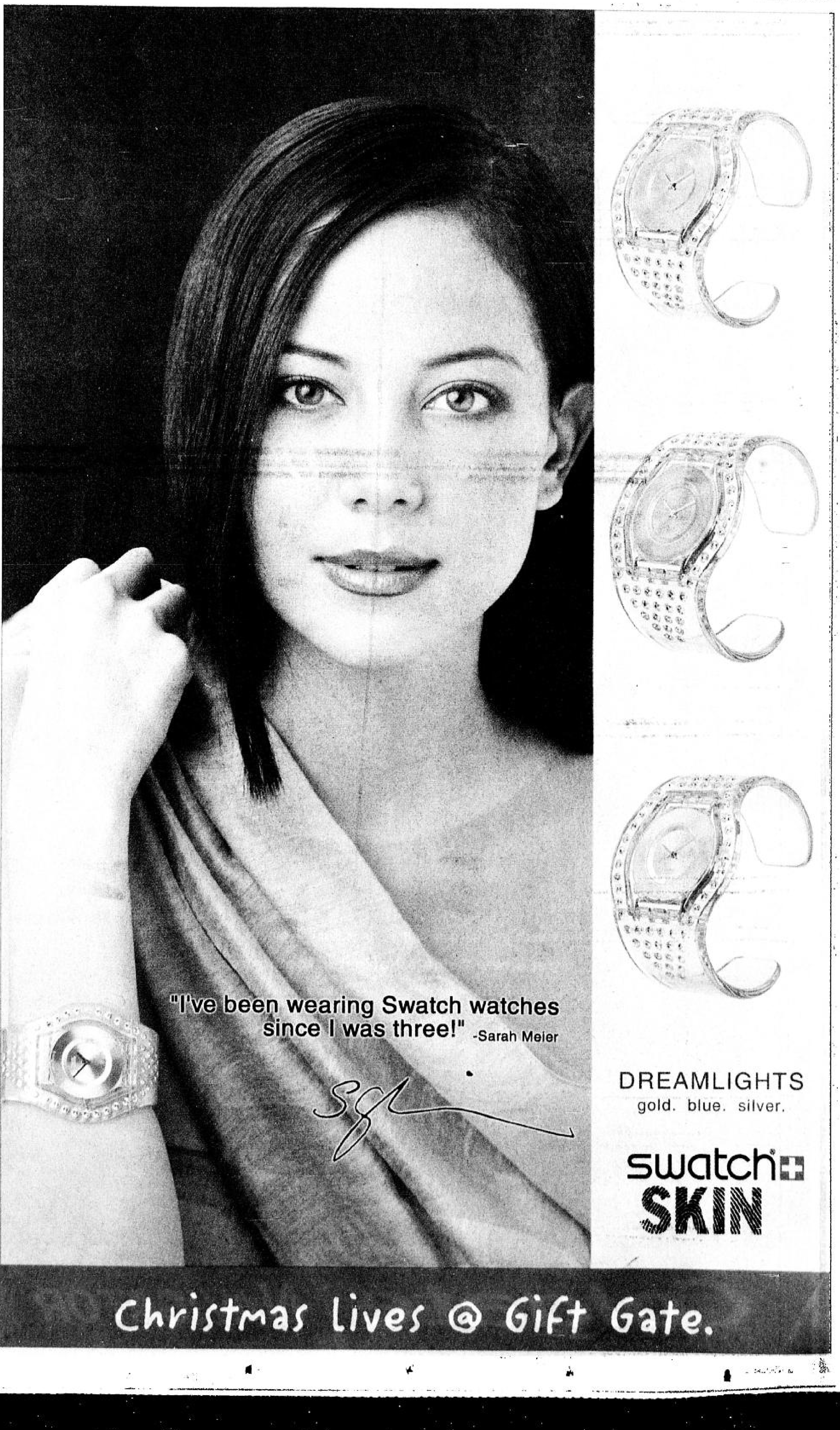
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BENOIT. Has polished his music to near-perfection.

Contrast of musical textures in Benoit's new 'Crossover Collection' album

By Leia Torre

DAVID Benoit was born in 1953 in Bakersfield, California, USA. He learned to appreciate music early on because of his parents, who played guitar and piano. When he was 14, he began taking piano lessons. By this time, both Ramsey Lewis and Henry Mancini were already exerting a considerable influence on his musical tastes. After his musical studies at El Camino College, he met with composer Richard Baskin and played the piano on the movie soundtrack of "Nashville" in 1975.

Arranger and accompanist

He gained valuable experience playing in various clubs and bars and became Gloria Lynne's pianist. Likewise, he was Lainie Kazan's arranger and accompanist during the 1976 tour of the Duke Ellington Orchestra. Drummer Alphonse Mouzon was his partner in his debut recording, and it was during these sessions that he met Dave Grusin, who would become an important figure in his future career.

He recorded a number of albums on a small label, and demonstrated his fluid and skillful playing, although the recordings suffered from an overall blandness that resulted in disappointing sales.

In 1985, his album "This Side Up" changed everything. It included the stunning single "Beach Trails," which was responsible for putting Benoit in the US jazz bestseller lists, and led to a call from Larry Rosen, Dave Grusin's partner at GRP Records.

With a series of best-selling albums of easy, yet beautifully constructed music, Benoit had now become one of the company's leading artists, forging a path similar to that of Grusin and bridging the gap between jazz and pop.

Adroitness

Each of his succeeding albums contains a balanced mix of songs and tracks, but it is Benoit's elegant "rippling" style on some of the simpler and slower numbers that best demonstrates his adroitness and sets his recordings apart from those of other artists.

"Kei's Song" from "Freedom At Midnight" and "The Key To You" from "Every Step Of the Way" are refined compositions. His pure acoustic style was highlighted on "Waiting for Spring," a concept album featuring Emily Remler and Peter Erskine.

In the album entitled "David Benoit: the Crossover Collection," some of the best recordings from Benoit's numerous successful albums are presented yet again. The album has 14 tracks, all of which exhibit the pianist's distinctive style that is almost jazz, but not exactly.

The titles are "Any Other Time," "Kei's Song," "Moments," "As If I Could Reach Rainbows," "The Key To You," "Every Step of the Way," "When She Believed in Me," "Freedom at Midnight," "Happiness," "I Just Can't Stop Loving You," "Days of Old," "Pebble Beach," "When The Winter's Gone (Song For A Stranger)," and "Sailing Through the City."

The first track in the collection, "Any Other Time," comes from the album "Shaken Not Stirred." It is essentially a pop song that has been "jazzed-up" by Benoit's piano playing. A lament about unintentionally hurtful words, it also serves as a veiled threat or a warning—that too many hurtful words can drive people away.

Instrumental number

The second selection, "Kei's Song," is an instrumental number that recalls one of those relaxing sanctuaries that have water as their main feature. It can be compared to a river, which later turns into a cascading waterfall, which in turn transforms into a tranquil lake. This track comes from the album "Freedom at Midnight."

Song number three in the collection, "Moments," was first included in the album "Shadows." It seems to exhibit more of the jazz influence than the other songs. A lot of syncopation can be observed in the piano and vocal portions of the number, giving it a distinct rhythm.

The fourth track, "As If I Could Reach Rainbows," is from the album "Urban Daydreams." It does not include vocals, and is a dreamy sequence which gives one the illusion of walking in the clouds, ascending and descending through all the layers that comprise them.

"The Key To You," which comes from the album "Every Step of the Way," is the fifth song in the collection. It has a long instrumental, mostly piano, lead-in, which somehow serves as the "stanzas" of the song. The vocals only come in during what could be considered the chorus portion of the song. After the chorus, the piano again takes over. It is quite a unique interpretation.

"Every Step of the Way," comes from the album with the same title. It is a deceptively simple instrumental number, which exhibits the complicated syncopation that is so typical of jazz compositions. The beat is one you could snap your fingers—or even dance—to.

Love song

"When She Believed in Me," a love song from the album, "The Benoit Freeman Project," possesses a refreshing sound, and typically sentimental lyrics to go with it. The song's tempo and rhythm, however, rescue it from the "mushiness" the lyrics could have inevitably led it to.

"Freedom at Midnight" hails from the album with the same title. It is an instrumental number with a beat that can really be danced to. The opening bars of the song are particularly attention-grabbing, with a beat that bears quite a resemblance to that of Latin music. This upbeat tempo is interspersed with more sedate passages for contrast (or to provide eager dancers with an opportunity to rest).

"Happiness," comes from the album "Here's to You Charlie Brown—50 Great Years." In this rendition, the classic song has been transformed into a version that is in essence still the same, different only in that the piano does its own solo during those portions of the song that used to have unremarkably simple accompaniment.

Slow tempo

Furthermore, the song with its slow tempo makes one realize that happiness need not be boisterous—it can be sentimental, as well. "I Just Can't Stop Loving You," is from the album "Every Step of the Way." It starts out with a simple, uncomplicated beat, but finishes with an intricately syncopated, jazzy one. The piano spices up the introduction, and lulls one into the proper mood for listening to the song.

The tempo gains momentum further into the song, and then, like in "The Key To You," the piano plays out the song, including the notes that were originally sung by the vocalist.

The eleventh track, "Days of Old," comes from the album "Shaken Not Stirred." It is primarily a song of reminiscing, and also one of sadness. With its very expressive lyrics, it talks of disillusionment with the present world and its circumstances.

The ultimate message is that the past, or "days of old," has a distinct advantage when compared with the dreary, gloomy present.

"Pebble Beach" is from the album "Here's to you Charlie Brown—50 Great Years." It is a piano solo which is very upbeat and fast-paced. It reminds one of, literally, waves crashing onto a shore, bringing a lot of things—including pebbles—with them.

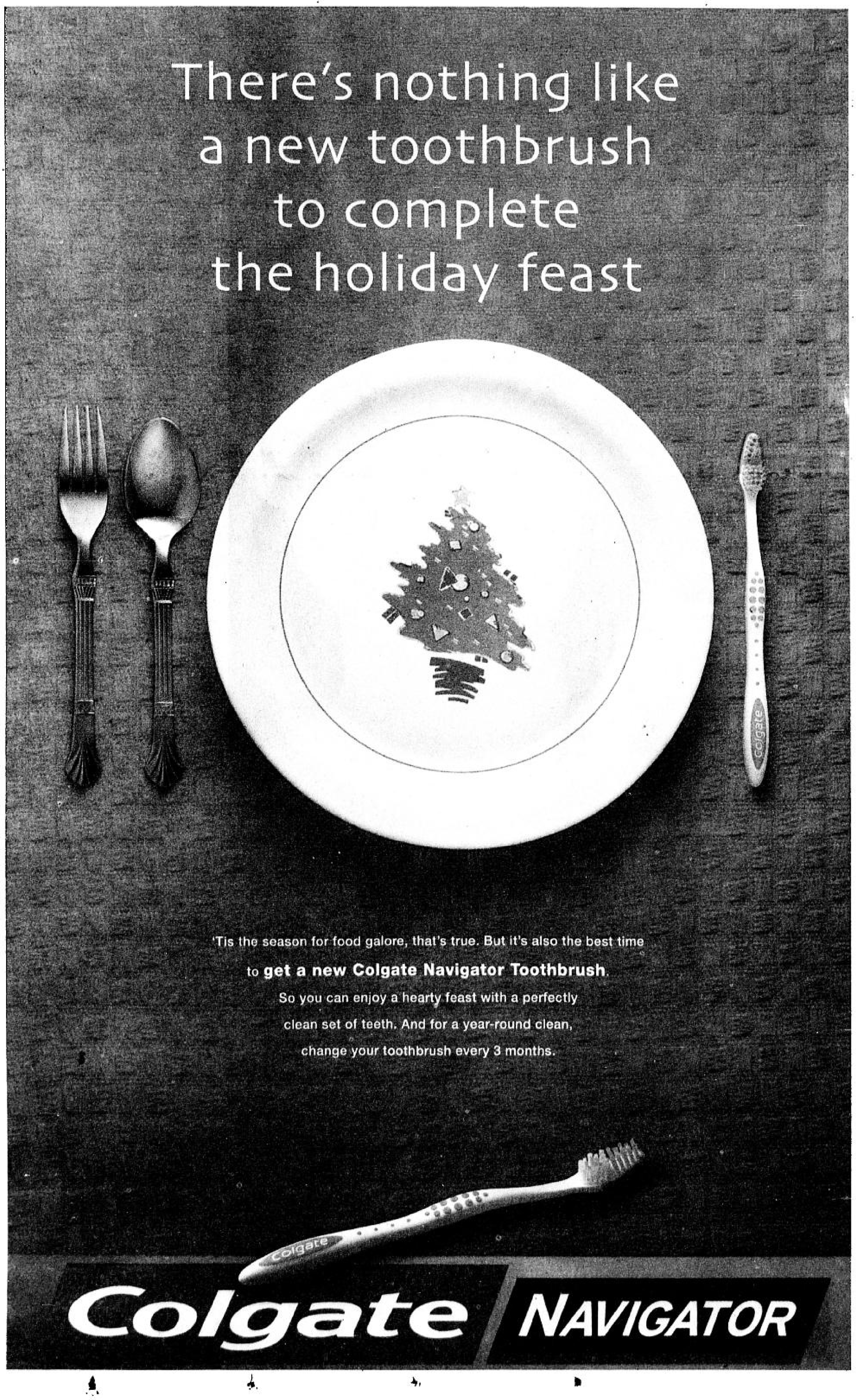
"When The Winter's Gone (Song For A Stranger)," from the album "Urban Daydreams," is a lonely song, but is not too slow or dragging. Very expressive interpretation of the piece is evident, with the piano complementing the singer's voice beautifully.

Last track

The last track in the collection, "Sailing Through the City," is also from the album "Urban Daydreams." The style is similar to that of "Pebble Beach," but with more accompanying instruments. It can make one envision oneself soaring over a cityscape filled with towering skyscrapers interspersed with quaint buildings, and with a river cutting through its heart—a contrast of textures.

Made possible by the 105.1 Crossover radio station, the album is as much a collection of some of Benoit's most memorable recordings as it is a tribute to his unique music and to the artist himself. It is an ideal place to start for those who want to experience Benoit's brand of music but don't know where to start, because choosing from his numerous albums without having any idea what they contain will doubtless prove to be a daunting endeavor.

David Benoit is unarguably an established artist, having polished his brand of music to near-perfection. In his own words, "I didn't want instant stardom like those artists whose fall is as quick as their rise." Jazz purists may pull their hair out in despair but until another genre is invented, jazz remains the closest category for Benoit's music.



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Thai hitmaker visits the Philippines for Cinemanila international filmfest

By Veron Dionisio

THE CINEMANILA International Film Festival has given the Philippine film audience a rare chance to watch films done in other Asian countries. This year's festival highlights a more exciting Thai cinema with films like "Bangkok Dangerous," "Nang Nak," "Dang Bireley," "Jan Dara," among others.

Symposium

To further focus on how films are done in Thailand, a noted Thai film director Nonzee Nimibutr ("Nang Nak," "Dang Bireley" and "Jan Dara") was guest in a symposium on New Thai Cinema held in one of the theatres at Greenbelt.

During the open forum, he revealed that while the film industry in his country is improving in terms of its maturing audience, there is still much to be desired, particularly in relation to the themes that a filmmaker can tackle.

"There are still restrictions and taboos, particularly when it comes to the subject of sex," he observes.

He only has three films to his credit, but Nimibutr is already considered one of the more prominent and acclaimed filmmakers in Thailand. A consistent hitmaker, Nimibutr produced two of these three films, because just like in the Philippines, projects that are considered non-formulaic by Thai box-office standards can end up not being produced.

"I want to make films that are close to my heart, and films that excite me, more than anything else," smiled the noted film director, who is visiting the Philippines for the second time.

His three films all made a killing at the tills, making him one of the more in-demand filmmakers in Thailand.

Vengeance

Of the three, "Nang Nak," a classic ghost tale focusing on the life, death and vengeance of a young woman, was the biggest moneymaker in Thai box-office history; while "Jan Dara," has been noted for its courageous depiction of how unbridled lust destroys a household in 1930's Bangkok.

One of the first films to openly tackle sex on the big screen, "Jan Dara" is a coming-of-age movie about a boy who grows up being despised by his father due to the death of his wife when she was giving birth to him. Based on one of the most erotic novels in Thai literature, the film has been controversial. In fact, according to Nimibutr, the Bangkok version of the film has eight cuts. "So viewers in other countries have the privilege of watching the film in its entirety," he adds.

Special

Nimibutr considers "Jan Dara" the closest to his heart. "It is very special to me because it deals with a subject that Thai society does not openly discuss. Sex in Thailand is something that people still don't want to tackle," he explains. "We're still inhibited when it comes to that."

The commercial appeal of his films has prompted Steven Spielberg to tap Nimibutr for a DreamWorks project in the future. But asked if he's setting his eyes on Hollywood, he smiles, "Not really."

จัน ดารา
JAN DARA

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Childhood fantasies

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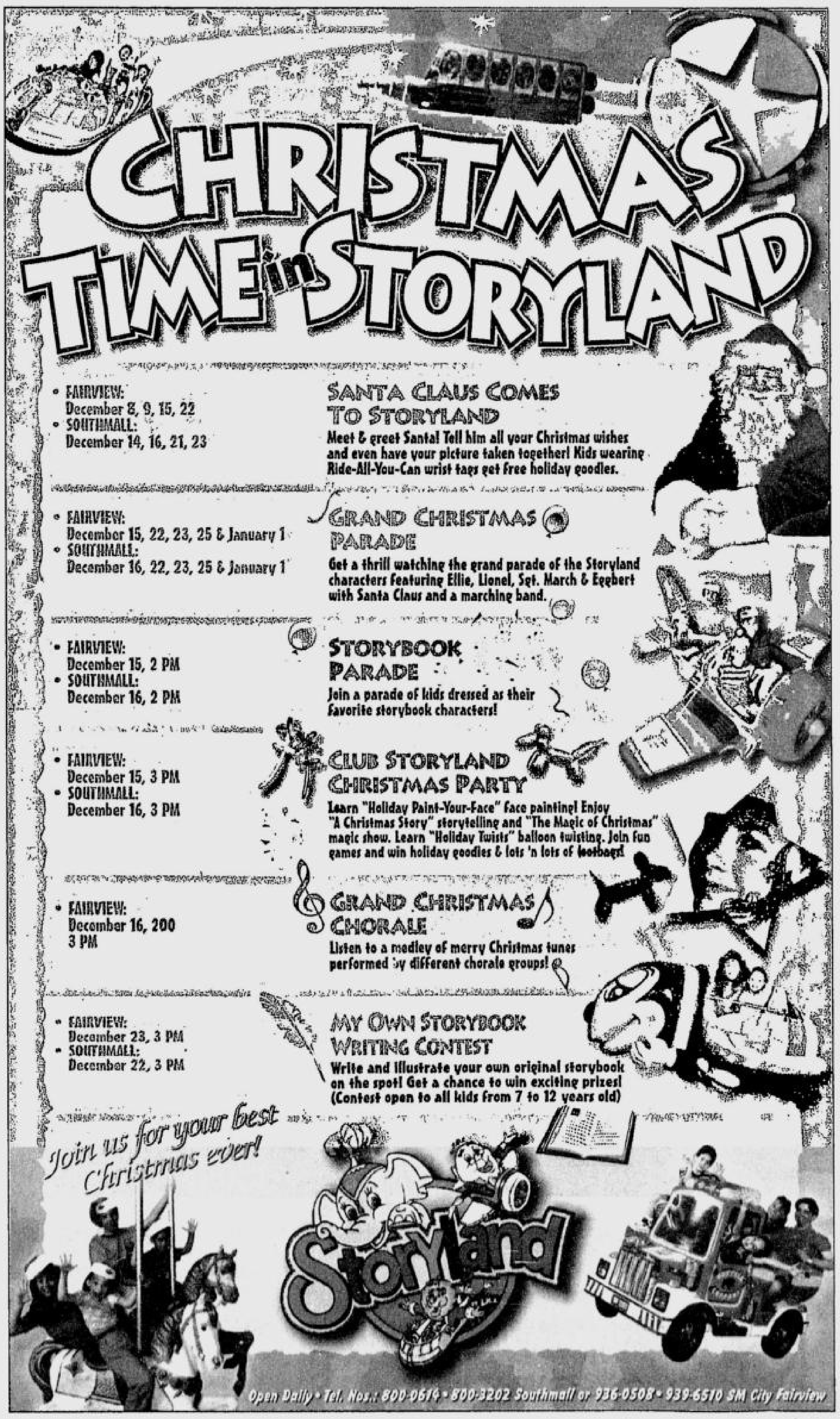
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December 16, 200
3 PM
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• FAIRVIEW:
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Albert doesn't mind sharing spotlight with special effects

By Edmund L. Sicam

FOR the first time in recent years, Albert Martinez, who's known for adult fare like "Scorpio Nights 2" and "Ekis," is finally in a movie that's sure to get a "G" rating. Albert is one of the stars of "Yamashita: The Tiger's Treasure," along with Rustom Padilla, Danilo Barrios, Camille Prats, and veteran actors Armando Goyena and Vic Diaz.

This time, Albert can bring his kids to the premiere night of his movie. "*Talagang dine*-sign *siya* for kids to appreciate and enjoy without their parents worrying," Albert says.

No sex

"There's no sex in this movie. Zero. *Pero kumpleto*. You have drama, you have light moments, *meron kang* adventure, and history." In addition, the film boasts of world-class special effects, which they claim is similar to Hollywood's "Pearl Harbor" and "Titanic."

The film tackles the tale of Yamashita's treasure, which has been the subject of countless treasure hunts. However, many say that it is just a tale passed on from generation to generation. However, Albert believes otherwise.

"A lot of people believe in the myth, so probably it really exists. *Sabi nga nila* if there's smoke, there's fire. Plus, we have some accounts based on the book *na pinahiram sa amin ni direk* Chito *na meron talagang nakakuha na mga* gold pieces."

According to Albert, the film is quite faithful to the book. He says about 30 percent of the film is based on "historical fiction." "*Pero may* sense of reality because may similarity *doon sa* actual *na nangyari*, so *pag napanood mo, akala mo totoo.*"

Albert plays a treasure hunter, whom he describes as "*cariñoso pero tuso*". "You don't know, does he have good intentions? Or is he bad? Is he just using the kids? You really can't tell. So *maraming* surprises *yung* character," Albert says. He says that this is why he accepted the role, even if it is not as colorful as the other characters. "My character is *maiinis ka, maaawa ka*. Character *lang siya pero marami siyang tinatago.*"

MARTINEZ (right) with "Yamashita" co-stars Rustom Padilla, Danilo Barrios and Armando Goyena.

Entertaining role

Albert likens his role to Harrison Ford in "Raiders of the Lost Ark". "My role is just there to entertain. For me, *masyado na akong maraming nagawa na* too heavy, or sexy. *Maiba naman*, add flavor to my list." Albert says that like the film "Titanic", "Yamashita" makes use of flashbacks. However, the difference is, in "Yamashita", the stories in both the past and the present unfold almost at the same time.

Albert promises a feel-good ending. "*Kagandahan ng pelikula ito*, towards the end, *yung na*-recover *na ang* treasure, you'll feel good *kasi ma-i*-imagine *mo ang sarili mo*, what if *makuha mo itong pera, ito pala ang mangyayari sa* Pilipinas! *Iyon ang magandang* message *ng pelikula*," he hints at the possible ending.

Albert says he doesn't mind being in a film where the special effects are topbilled along with the actors. "*Bihira kasing gumawa na pelikulang ganito, e. Kung* Hollywood ito, *kasama ka na sa* 'Pearl Harbor' *o kaya nakasingit ka man lang sa* 'Titanic.' Not in the Philippines, *di ba*? And *ito ang* first time *na gumawa ng ganito kalaking* project, as ambitious as this one. I'm very lucky *na nakasama ako dito.*"

Battleships

The actor notes that sometimes, in Hollywood films, the special effects take over the whole movie. This is not the case with "Yamashita." "Dito, it enhances the story but it doesn't envelop the entire film, *so hindi siya* special effects movie. *Kasi* without the special effects, *paano mo i*-shu-shoot *yung* footage *na lumusob ang mga Hapon o* for example *kailangan nila ng* 10 battleships?

Albert clarifies further that the effects in this film are not in the form of monsters or surreal things. They are merely used to bring the audience back in time. "And the only way to do it is via special effects," he says.

Albert talks about one dangerous scene which was made easier by special effects. The chase scene was shot without the actors present. "Actually, we tried it originally, *kami ang nakasakay*. Unfortunately, *hindi kaya ng* cradle *iyung sasakyan kung saan kami nakasakay*." The producers feared the actors might fall over the flyover and that other people might also get hurt. They decided not to take the risk and went with the special effects instead.

Albert has seen some of the footage from the film and he is floored by the scenes he saw. "*Medyo* critic *ako sa* special effects *kasi siyempre* Hollywood *ang tingin, pero ang galing*! The planes, the battleships look so real." There is even a Pearl Harbor scene, which they say can hold its own against the ones done by Hollywood.

Albert is not surprised that the Philippines is able to produce a movie with such high-grade special effects as "Yamashita." "*Malayo na ang narating natin* when it comes to special effects, *kasi* most of it, *Pilipino ang gumagawa*. Unfortunately, *kung walang mag*-take ng risk *na* producer *na mag*-invest *sa* effects, *masyadong mahal*. *Si* Mother (Lily) *naman*, thank God, *naisipan*

ALBERT/p.F5

Joel Silver produces hair-raising horror film set in unusual house

FROM hit producer Joel Silver ("The Matrix," "Lethal Weapon") comes the new horror-thriller "Thirteen Ghosts" starring Shannon Elizabeth ("American Pie"), Matthew Lillard ("Scream"), Tony Shalhoub ("Men in Black") and Embeth Davidtz ("Schindler's List").

Two children

In the film, Arthur Kriticos (Shalhoub) and his two children, Kathy (Elizabeth) and Bobby (Alec Roberts), have lost everything but each other. Arthur's wife and the children's mother perished in a fire that left the surviving family members with nothing.

Nothing, that is, until out of nowhere Arthur inherits an unusual house form his mysterious, eccentric Uncle Cyrus (F. Murray Abraham). Made entirely of glass and steel, the house is a shining wonder of modern architecture, all dazzling open spaces and clean, sharp lines.

As they explore their new home, admiring its elegantly etched glass walls, Arthur and the children can hardly believe their good fortune.

What they don't know is that this house of light holds a dark secret within.

The mastermind behind the original 1960 feature film "Thirteen Ghosts" was famed filmmaker and terror impresario William Castle, whose best known and most respected production was Roman Polanski's 1968 thriller, "Rosemary's Baby."

Anticipation

"William Castle understood that what truly scares people is the *anticipation* of the unthinkable," Joel Silver notes, "and he developed techniques to exploit audiences' fears and bring a new level of entertainment to the genre and to the moviegoing experience."

"There is such a wealth of material in William Castle's movies," says producer Gil Adler. "In remaking 'Thirteen Ghosts,' we updated the story for today's audiences, but the visceral elements are very similar to the original film. The basic emotions of love and fear and hate are timeless."

LILLARD. Plays a tortured psychic.

The producers relished the challenge of contemporizing another fundamental aspect of Castle's original films: "Today's sophisticated movie audiences are accustomed to cutting-edge special effects and advanced film technologies that weren't available to Castle and his production team," Adler says.

"With this film, we wanted to tell the tale of a family that is put in jeopardy because they succumb to temptation," director Steve Beck explains. "They're in a very different place in their lives and they have been offered a kind of carrot on a stick when they inherit this incredible house that appears to be the answer to all of their problems."

Captivated

Tony Shalhoub who plays the father, Arthur Kriticos, was drawn to the film's chillingly evocative screenplay. "There was something about this script that creeped me out, that really got under my skin," Shalhoub recalls. "I was captivated by the concept of being trapped in this glass house where you're constantly disoriented and you can't trust your own eyes."

As the Kriticos family explores their bizarre new home—a modern architectural masterpiece, filled with Cyrus's collection of priceless antiques—Arthur and the children can hardly believe their good fortune. But it isn't long before they discover that there is something hideous trapped behind the house's elegantly etched crystal-clear walls: one by one, twelve evil spirits—each horrible disfigured by their deaths—are being released and begin stalking the family.

Tortured psychic

With the help of a tortured psychic named Rafkin (Matthew Lillard) and the beautiful Kalina (Embeth Davidtz), a militant activist determined to free the imprisoned spirits, Arthur and the children realize that they have been lured into a lethal trap.

If they are to leave the house alive, Arthur, the children and their mortal companions must solve its deadly riddle—a lethal puzzle that contains the key to their imminent salvation or destruction.

"Ultimately, this story does not revel in evil," Shalloub attests. "The film is about the triumph of good over insurmountable obstacles."

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Albert . . . (From page F4)

niyang sumugal sa ganitong klaseng pelikula para magawa iyung vision ni direk Chito."

Tedious work

At present, Albert is involved in one soap opera on TV, "Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin." He finds the work challenging but tedious.

But what Albert really enjoys are independent films with character-driven stories. He has several films lined up after the festival. In January, he is shooting an experimental film, "Utang ni Tatang," an independent film by John Red. After that, he has "Boso" with Yam Laranas.

"Boso" features Raven Villanueva as one of the characters. Albert claims that this movie cannot really be classified as "bold" even if the title suggests it. "*Ang* character *ko* is playing God." Albert relates that the main character owns a row of apartments. His pasttime is to look at his tenants' lives through the ceiling. "*Pag* 6 o'clock *na, alam niyang gagawin ni* family A, family B, until *may dumating na bagong kasal. Doon na nag-umpisa ang boso.*"

Albert likens the film to the Sharon Stone starrer "Sliver," but without the high tech equipment. "*Sinisilip niya lang. Kita niya na kumukupit yung anak, nag-aaway yung mag-asawa.*" The character's conflict arises when he witnesses an event and has to decide whether he will report it to the police or not, knowing that the act of *pamboboso* is illegal in itself.

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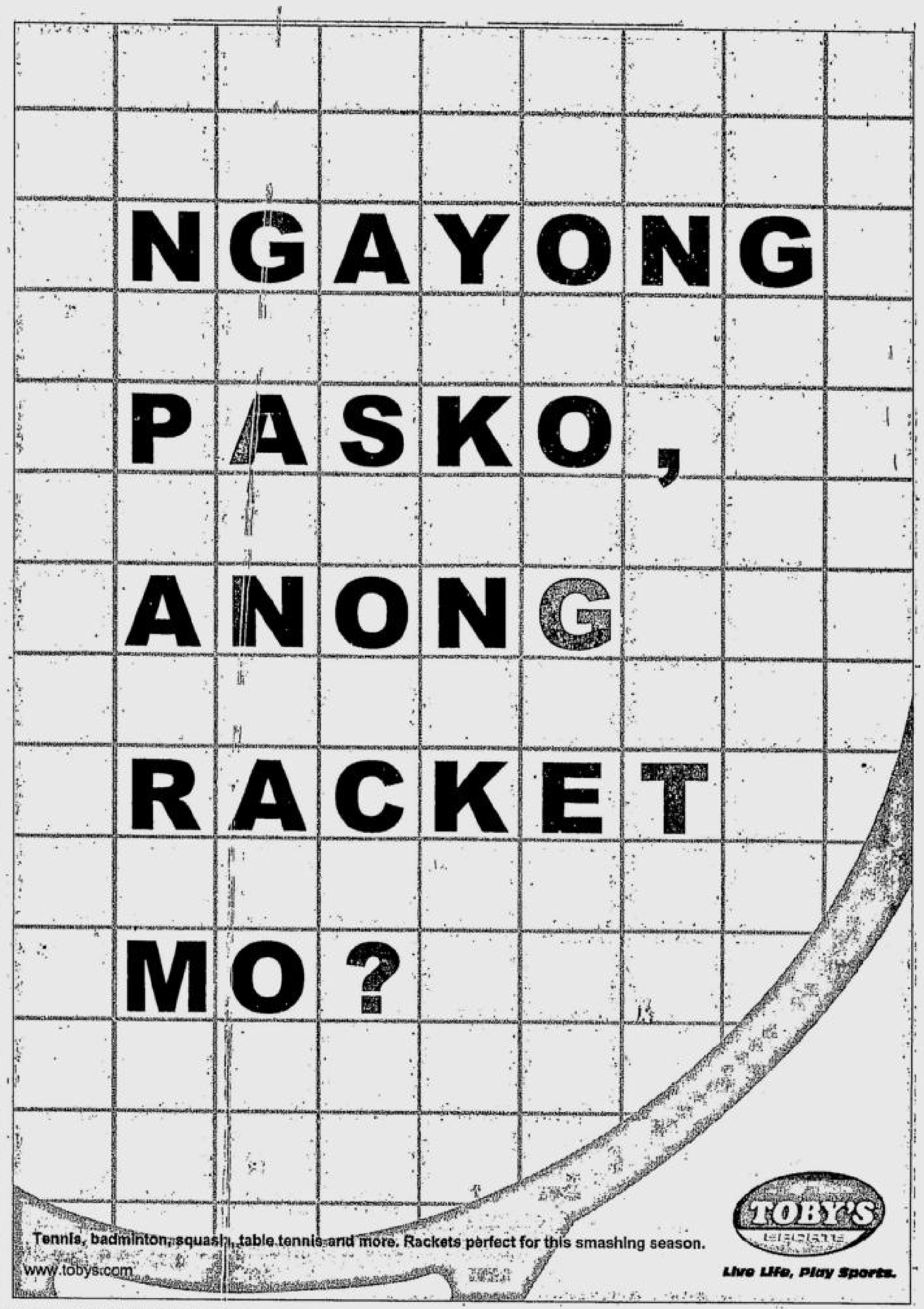

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movies

- **GENTXT Movie Night " Rock Star"**
  Date : December 08
  Time : 8:00 pm
  Venue: Glorietta 4
  THX Cinema 3

events

- **GENTXT Billiards Night featuring "The Groove"**
  Date : December 04
  Time : 7:00 pm
  Venue: Gameworx,Festival Mall
- **M2M Live!**
  Date : December 07
  Time : 6:00 pm
  Venue: World Trade Centre, Manila
- **"The Company" Live**
  Date : December 14
  Time : 9:00 pm
  Venue: Summit Bar,
  Royal Mandaya Hotel, Davao
- **Hard Rock Concert Series**
  Date : December 12 (South Border)
  December 20 (FreeStyle)
  December 29 (Side A)
  Time : 9:30 pm
  Venue: Hard Rock Café, Glorietta 3

parties

- **StreetLife Re-Opening Party**
  Date : December 12
  Time : 7:30 pm
  Venue : Glorietta 2
- **GENTXT Winter Rush**
  Date : December 15
  Time : 9:00 pm
  Venue : Where Else,
  Hotel Inter-Continental
- **GRILLA Christmas Party**
  Date : December 19
  Time : 8:00 pm
  Venue : Grilla, Libis
- **Skybox 1st Anniversary Year-end Party**
  Date : December 28
  Time : 9:00 pm
  Venue : Skybox Restaurant & Bar,
  Baguio

dining

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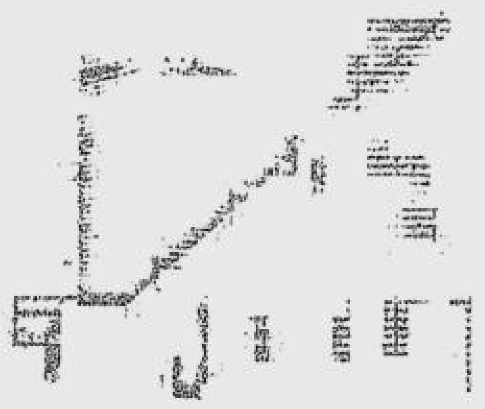

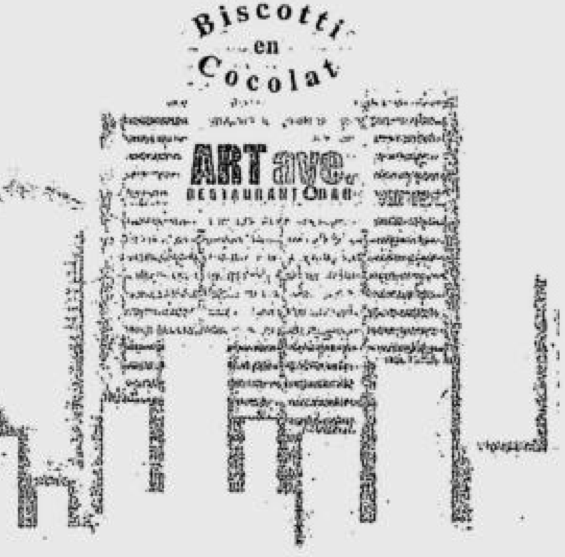

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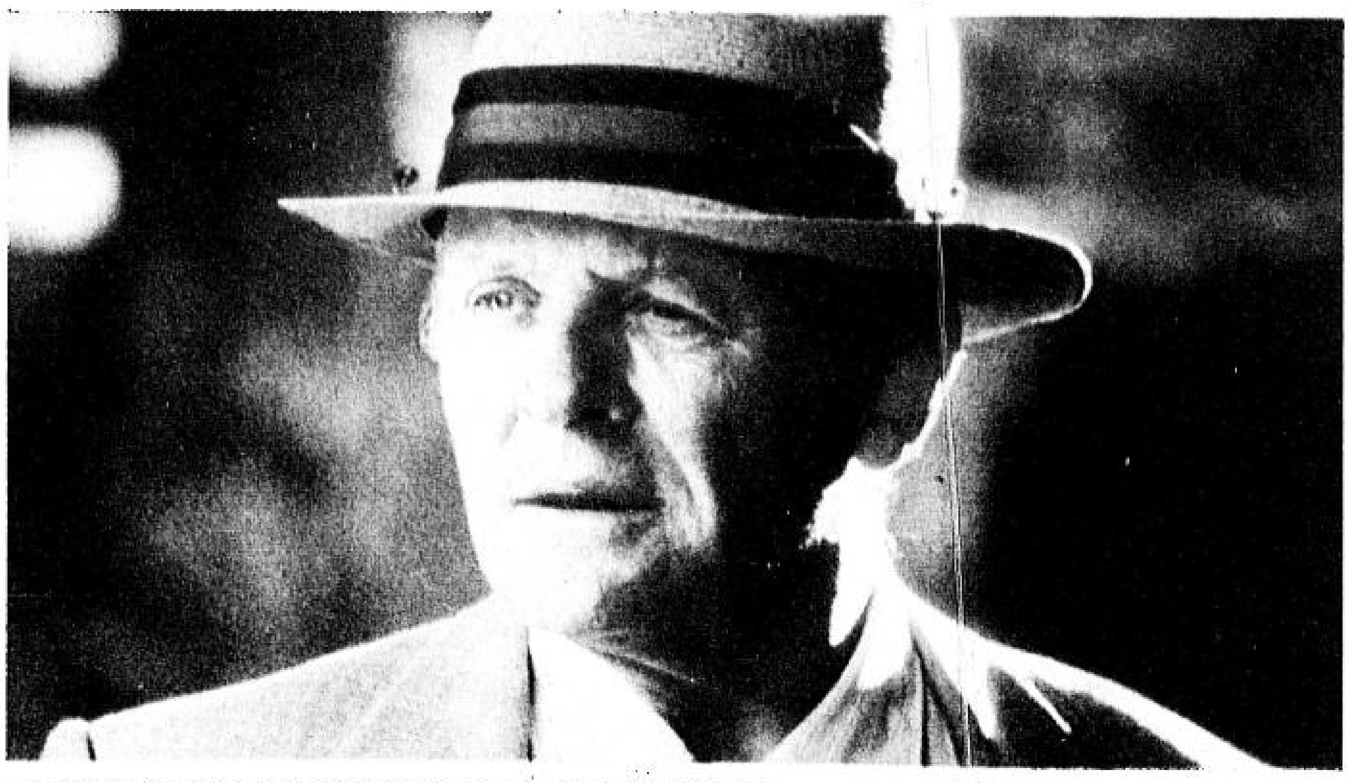


HOPKINS. Plays a lodger who changes an 11-year-old boy's life.

'Hearts In Atlantis' touches viewers' hearts

A YOUNG fatherless boy learns about life—and heartbreak—from a man with a mysterious past in the new Anthony Hopkins starrer, "Hearts in Atlantis" from Warner Bros.

Distant images

For middleaged photographer Bobby Garfield (David Morse), memories of his childhood are but distant images. But the summer of Bobby's 11th birthday comes crashing back when Bobby must return to his hometown for the funeral of a childhood friend.

It's 1960 again, and Bobby ("Along Came a Spider's"Anton Yelchin) is just 11 and living with his widowed mother, Liz, (Hope Davis). Liz' bitterness at being left alone when her husband died is palpable, but things are made more bearable for the boy by the presence of two buddies: the beautiful Carol ("The Patriot's" Mika Boorem) and Sully (Will Rothraar). But when a new lodger enters his world, Ted Brautigan (Hopkins), Bobby's life may never be the same.

Guardian angel

Bobby knows something is different about Ted: The older man knows things about Bobby's life that the boy never told him. You'd think Bobby might be freaked out, but the gentle Ted listens to Bobby like no adult has before. Ted is almost like Bobby's guardian angel . . . until his ability to read minds threatens his safety. As the realization dawns that the world is not always a safe place, Bobby senses that his childhood is drawing to a close.

Oscar winner

"Hearts in Atlantis," adapted from the Stephen King novel of the same title, has heavy-hitting talent behind it. Screenwriter William Goldman is the Oscar winner behind such King-based movies as "Misery," and Oscar-nominated director Scott Hicks brought the world the acclaimed drama "Shine."

"Stephen King wrote a story that has universal appeal to it," notes Hicks. "This story takes place at the point in the child's life where he becomes aware of a bigger, darker world out there. Bobby has to bear witness to all (these tragic events) but is powerless to prevent any of it from happening. It is one of those moments in which you become aware of how deep and complicated life can be . . . Ted's curious power is something that will have an impact on Bobby for the rest of his life."

Christmas spirit on 'Game K N B?'

THE COUNTRY'S game show with a heart, "Game K N B?" brought on the Christmas spirit when it presented its donations to deserving organizations last week.

Actor Romnick Sarmenta and TV personality Julius Babao became virtual Santa Clauses for their favored charity organizations when they went with the "Game K N B?" crew to award their winning donations.

Educational plans

Romnick, who received a total prize of P200,000 and two showcases, won educational plans for Ephpheta, a local foundation tasked to create better opportunities for blind people.

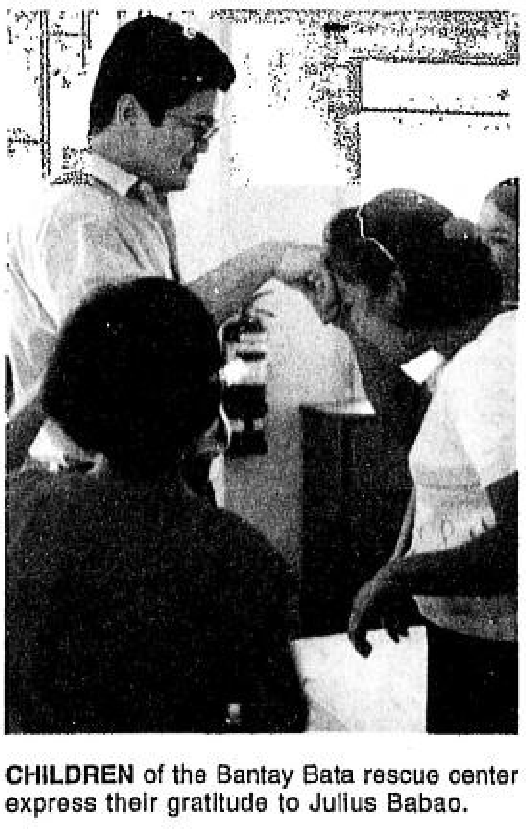
After winning P500,000 and becoming one of the biggest early winners of "Game K N B?" Julius Babao looked a little closer to home by winning an entertainment showcase for the children of the Bantay Bata rescue center.

Over the two months it has been on air, the Kris Aquino-hosted show has given away an average of P1,100,000 a week, edging close to P10 million in cash and prizes. But it doesn't stop there. Through its Kabuhayan Showcase portion, "Game K N B?" has also helped people closest to the contestants' hearts.

Showcases

To date, "Game K N B? winners have given tricycles, college educational plans, medical plans, and sari-sari store showcases to people who need it most.

How can one join? "Game K N B" recently announced two new phone landlines for prospective studio contestants. BayanTel subscribers can now try their luck through "Game K N B?" BayanTel phone line 1-901-3-227-226. Meanwhile, PLDT subscribers can call the "Game K N B?" toll number 1-908-1-227-226. Each call will cost callers P10 per minute.



CHILDREN of the Bantay Bata rescue center express their gratitude to Julius Babao.

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Town and Country Comforter Queensize (218.44 cms x 233.68 cms)
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Promising movies showing on cable television this week

BY NOELANI TORRE

ON the HBO Channel:

'Band of Brothers 09: Why We Fight/ 10: Points (Finale Special)'

Saturday, Dec. 15, 10:30 p.m.. This is the explosive finish to the critically-acclaimed HBO miniseries produced by Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks. In these last two episodes, Easy Company liberates a concentration camp and captures Hitler's Eagle's Nest. The war is over for them after that.

'American Beauty'

Saturday, Dec. 15, 12:30 a.m. Academy-award winner for Best Picture, this honest and unsettling film takes a close look at American suburbia and reveals the darkness and complexity of the American middle-class. Superb performances by a cast headed by Kevin Spacey, Annette Bening, Mena Suvari and Thora Birch.

'The Goodbye Girl'

Saturday, Dec. 15, 4:30 a.m. A warm comedy about a young actor and a divorcee forced to share one apartment in New York City, this movie has a great script and performances of the same caliber. Penned by Neil Simon, it stars Richard Dreyfuss in his award-winning performance as the actor.

'Stuart Little'

Sunday, Dec. 16, 6:30 p.m. This is the charming story of an orphaned mouse adopted by human parents, the Littles. The computer-animated Stuart is a delight to watch, as is his equally delightful human brother (who also appeared in "Jerry Maguire").

CHRISTINA Ricci got her big break in "Sleepy Hollow."

'The Patriot'

Sunday, Dec. 16, 10 p.m. Starring Mel Gibson and Heath Ledger, this is the story of the American Revolutionary War in general and of one American in particular. Gibson plays a father who is drawn into the war when a British commander kills his son. This is history come alive and Gibson delivers a strong performance.

'The Prince of Egypt'

Tuesday, Dec. 18, 6:30 a.m. In this breathtaking adaptation of the Exodus story, DreamWorks gives us a more human view of life, and a marvelous score. Featuring the voices of Val Kilmer, Ralph Fiennes, Sandra Bullock, and Michelle Pfeiffer.

'The Outsider'

Tuesday, Dec. 18, 5:15 p.m. Directed by Delbert Mann, this movie stars Tony Curtis in a powerful performance as Ira Hamilton Hayes, the Puma Indian who was one of the marines who raised the US flag on Iwo Jima.

'The Blues Brothers'

Tuesday, Dec. 18, 12:45 a.m. This off the wall, wacky and thoroughly enjoyable comedy is the tale of brothers who are trying to revive their old band in order to raise money.

Directed by John Landis, it stars John Belushi, Dan Aykroyd, The Blues Brothers Band, Cab Calloway, John Candy, Henry Gibson, Carrie Fisher, Charles Napier, Jeff Morris, Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin and James Brown.

MEL Gibson joins the war after the death of his son in "The Patriot."

'Sleepy Hollow'

Wednesday, Dec. 19, 12:30 a.m. Tim Burton's adaptation of the much-loved Mark Twain tale, this macabre movie is both chilling and, at odd moments, almost funny, Johnny Depp stars as Ichabod Crane opposite Christina Ricci, and Christopher Walken is perfectly terrifying as the Headless Horseman.

On the Cinemax channel:

'National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation'

Saturday, Dec. 15, 12:15 p.m. The third in the National Lampoon Vacation series, we follow the Griswold family's disaster-strewn path as they blunder through the holiday season. Funny and poignant at times, it stars Chevy Chase as the brain-dead Mr. Griswold.

'Shenandoah'

Saturday, Dec. 15, 2 p.m. An American Civil War saga, this is the story of a Virginia widower initially indifferent to the war until it begins to involve his family, Powerful and moving, it stars James Stewart, Dong McClure, Glenn Corbett, Patrick Wayne, Rosemary Forsythe and Katharine Ross.

'Moscow On the Hudson'

Saturday, Dec. 15, 4 a.m. Directed by Paul Mazursky, this comedy-drama is about a Russian musician who defects while in New York City and tries to adapt to his new land. Robin Williams gives a wonderful and endearing performance in the lead role.

'The End of the Affair'

Monday, Dec. 17, 7:15 p.m. Starring Ralph Fiennes and Julianne Moore, this is the story of a passionate but doomed wartime love affair between a writer (Fiennes) and a married woman (Moore). Based on Graham Greene's novel.

JULIANNE Moore co-stars with Ralph Fiennes in "The End of the Affair."

'Anak'

Wednesday, Dec. 19, 10 p.m. Starring our very own Vilma Santos, this is the familiar and poignant story of an OFW mother and the daughter who has grown estranged from her. Also starring Claudine Barretto as the rebellious daughter.

'Reservoir Dogs'

Wednesday, Dec. 19, 10:30 p.m. Now a cult favorite, this is the shocking debut of writer-director and co-star Quentin Tarantino, telling the story of the crime world's denizens, or some of them at least. Stars Harvey Keitel, Tim Roth, Michael Madsen, Chris Penn, Steve Buscenni, and Lawrence Tiemey in brilliant performances.

'The Nun's Story'

Thursday, Dec. 20, 5 p.m. Directed by Fred Zinnemann, Audrey Hepburn plays a nun who serves in the Belgian Congo and later leaves the convent. Based on Kathryn Hulme's book, it is both tasteful and interesting. Also stars Peter Finch, Edith Evans, Peggy Ashcroft and Colleen Dewhurst.

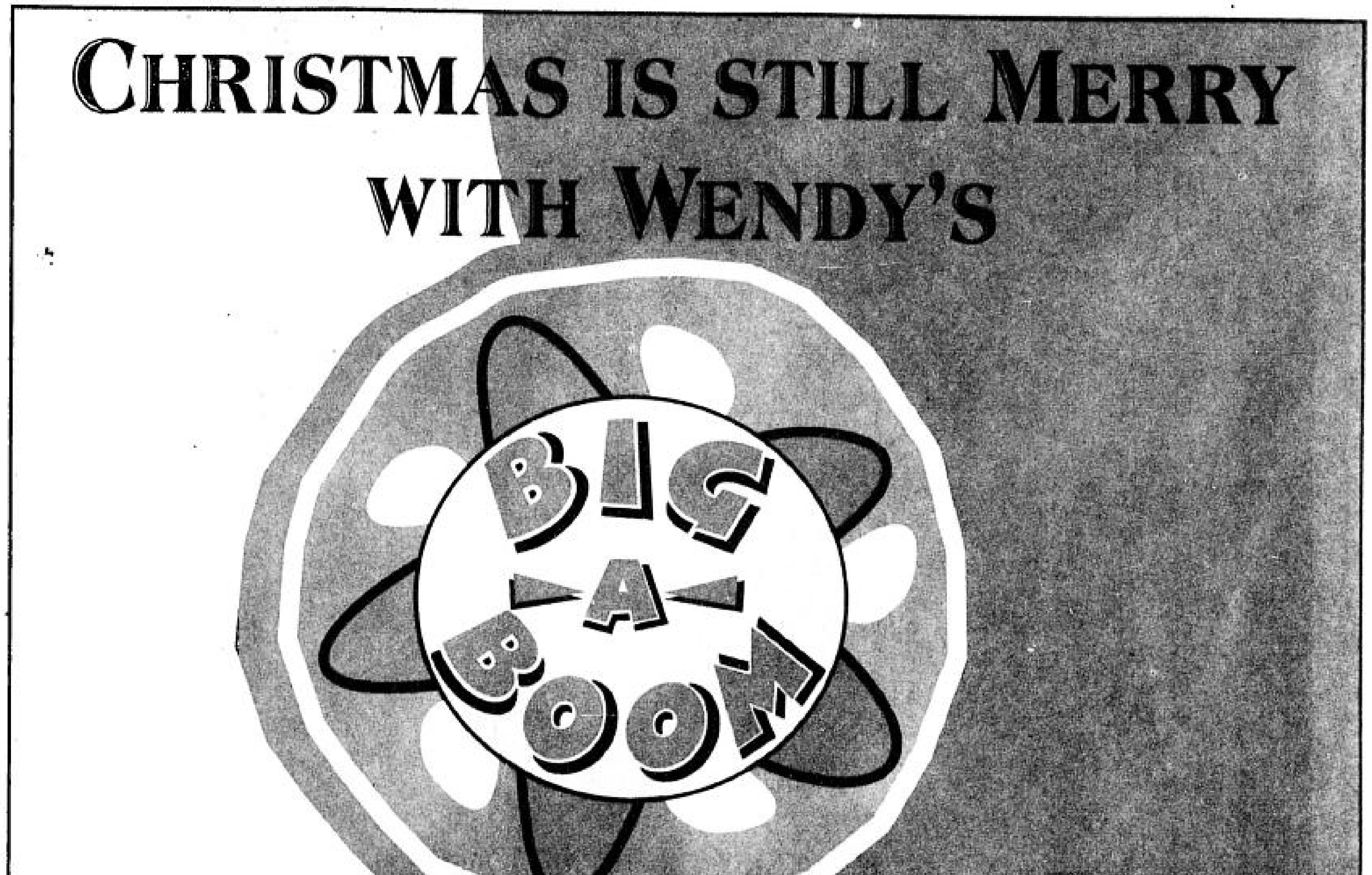
'School Ties'

Thursday, Dec. 20, 9 p.m. A movie about anti-Semitism, this is the story of a Jewish boy who wins a football scholarship to an elite prep school and tries to hide his origins for fear of being ostracized. Brendan Fraser gives a strong lead performance, followed by Matt Damon, Ben Affleck and Chris O' Donnell.

'Biloxi Blues'

Friday, Dec. 21, 7:30 a.m. Once again we meet Eugene Jerome, Neil Simon's "youthful alter ego" in "Brighton Beach Memoirs." In this film, his adventures lead him to a stint in army basic training. Directed by Mike Nichols, it stars Matthew Broderick (as Jerome), Christopher Walken and Penelope Ann Miller.

ANNETTE Bening plays Kevin Spacey's wife in "American Beauty."



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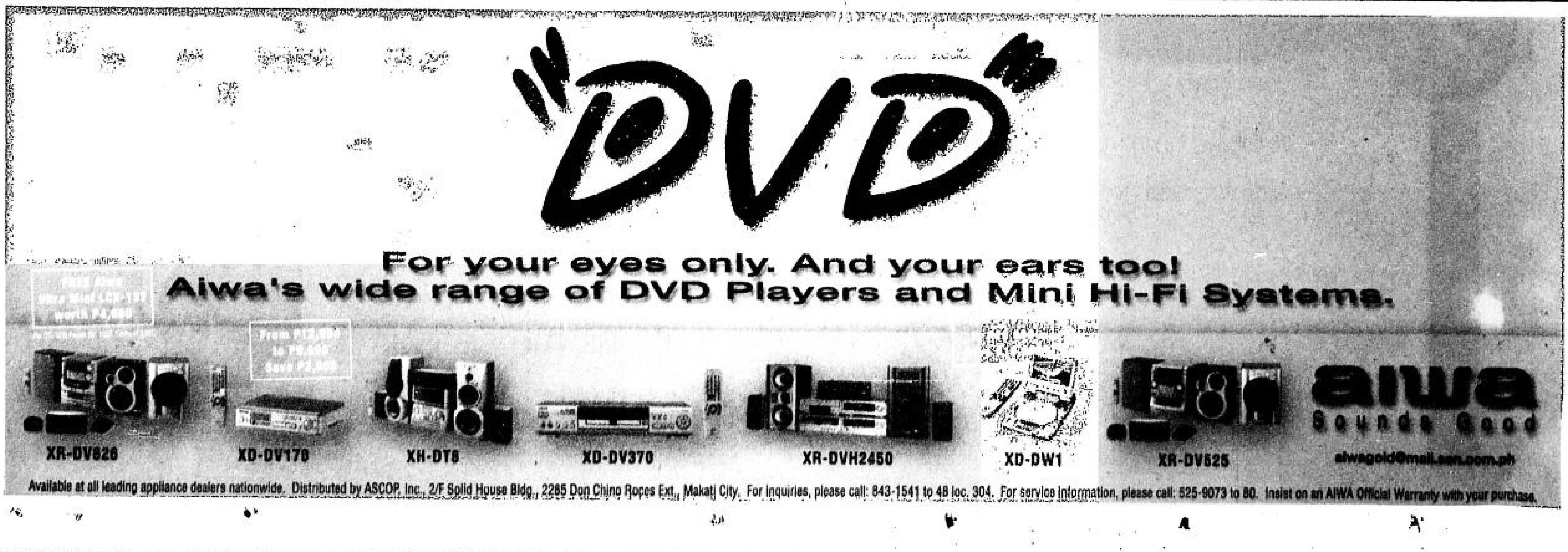

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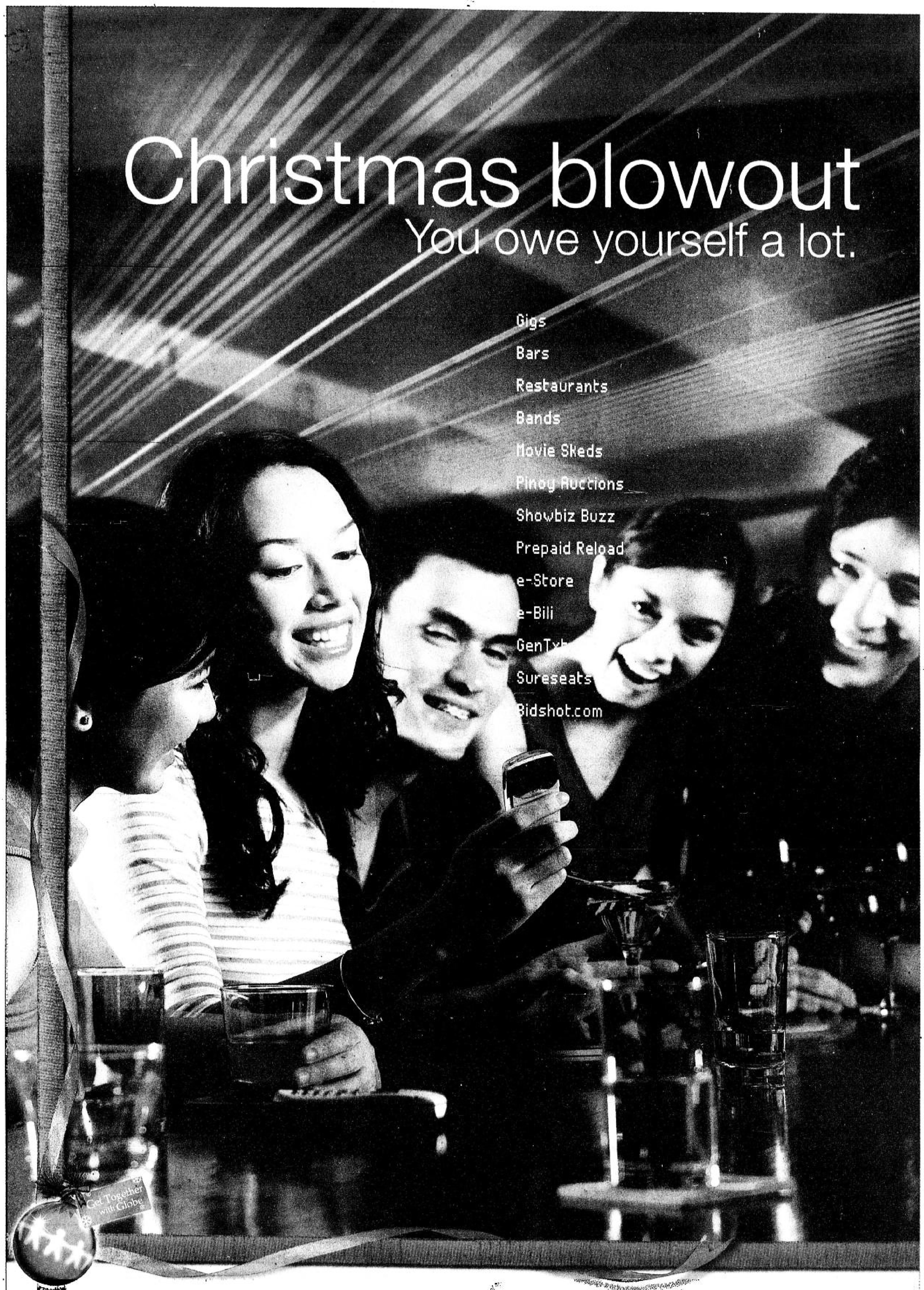
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Saturday SPECIAL

Sting dedicates new album, recorded live on Sept. 11, to victims of terrorist attacks

BY JOCELYN VALLE

A NEW album from Sting is always cause for celebration. The former schoolteacher, soccer coach and ditch digger, who shot to fame as frontman and bassist of The Police, the successful British band in the late '70s and early '80s, and later on was able to establish a remarkable solo career, is both an imaginative and a disciplined songwriter.

Musical union

Thus, he is able to marry words and melody to come up with a good song. He strengthens the musical union with a powerful theme that is conveyed through identifiable objects or activities used as metaphors (e.g. "Message in a Bottle," "When We Dance").

Sting writes all the songs in his recordings and then assembles some of the best musicians (Branford Marsalis, for instance, in "Englishman in New York") to help make his tunes come alive.

His latest album, "Sting…All This Time," is "just" a collection of his previously-recorded songs, rearranged in such a way that they sound brand-new. But it will surely be the most memorable compilation for him and his fans.

Horrific bombings

"Sting…All This Time" was recorded live at the British musical artist's villa in Tuscany, Italy, called Il Palagio, a few hours after the horrific bombings in New York and Washington in the United States.

What Sting had planned as a joyous musical treat for his select audience (made up of lucky fan club members and competition winners) and the general public (via simulcast on the Web) turned out to be an emotional and difficult situation.

Sting was reportedly too shaken to go on with the show. Minutes before the devastation happened, he got a call from a friend who was then at the World Trade Center.

He also knew that his audience that night came from different parts of the world and they, too, may have had relatives or friends who, at that moment, were suffering or had passed on.

After a serious talk with his band, it was decided that Sting would sing just one song and then the web-cast would be shut off "as a token of respect to those who have lost their lives and loved ones in this terrible event."

He told the crowd: "It's up to you. I'd like a minute's silence after that song, I don't want any applause. I just want us to stand and think about what has happened today. It's difficult for all of us - I'm angry, I'm confused, I'm frightened and I don't really want to give this meaningless act of violence any credence. It's totally and utterly pointless. I'd like to sing this song for those people who've lost their lives."

Campaign

Sting performed "Fragile." Contrary to popular belief, this is not an environmental song, though it's about the rain and came out as Sting was starting his campaign for the preservation of the Brazilian rainforests.

Sting has pointed out in several interviews that it's about a man called Ben Linder who was an American Peace Corps worker in Nicaragua, who was shot by the Contras.

But Sting observes that his songs have varied meanings for different people. "Fragile" was perfect for the Sept. 11 devastation and its aftermath.

'Fragile' was perfect for the devastation and its aftermath

Lyrics like these explain why: *If blood will flow when flesh and steel are one/ Drying in the colour of the evening sun/ Tomorrow's rain will wash the stains away/ But something in our minds will always stay*

Perhaps this final act was meant/ *To clinch a lifetime's argument/ That nothing comes from violence/ And nothing ever could/ For all those born beneath an angry star/ Lest we forget how fragile we are*

On and on the rain will fall/ Like tears from a star/ Like tears from a star/ On and on the rain will say/ How fragile we are/ How fragile we are.

The applause was thunderous, encouraging Sting and his band to play more numbers, totaling 18. Although there was a feeling of uncertainty, the performers and the crowd followed their hearts and succumbed to the comforting power of music. The terrorists may have destroyed buildings and claimed lives, but definitely not their spirits.

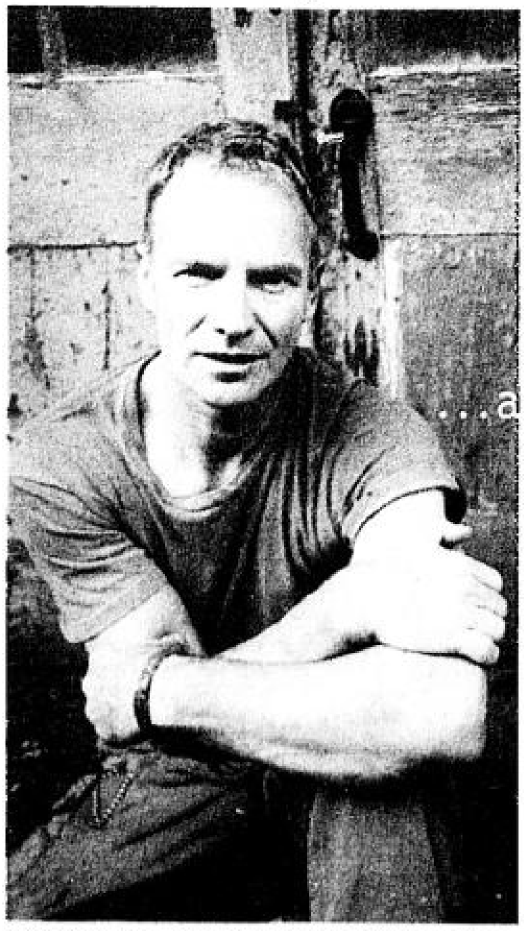
Sadly, Radio station Wave 89.1's screening of "Sting…All This Time" as part of its "Wave Walk in the Movies" series (back-to-back with the Nicholas Cage starrer, "The Family Man") at Eastwood City in Libis, Quezon City last Dec. 8 was a disappointment.

Video premiere

The DJ-hosts bragged that it was the Philip-

STING/ p. G2

WHAT Sting had planned as a joyous musical occasion became an emotional and difficult situation.



STING. Too shaken to go on with the show.

kids and jam a perfect fit
jam
Rustan's
MAKATI • ALABANG

Crisis before Christmas (Why me, Lord?)

By Jeanne Young

FOR the control freak, prepare to die.

"Die to self," as the Good Book says, because this is possibly the weirdest time of your life. The world's top business school can't prepare you for what you will have to encounter, and solve, to stay pretty much on top of things.

Prayers

To cope with being peri-menopausal you're going to need—I didn't say want but *need*—lots of tea and sympathy. Lots of family who care and good friends. Lots of prayers. A determination to stay nice, *i.e.*, beg for graces to stay nice. And lots of professional help.

Should you ignore this warning, do so at your own peril.

Let me tell you what's happened to me:

I turned 50 on Sept. 11, 2001. Although my mom, movie icon and golden girl of LVN Pictures, Mila del Sol, insists that she's 45, and my longtime doctor, Raul Fores, says I'm older that he is, I've got the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon to remind me, lest I conveniently forget.

I must admit that getting to 50 was the frightful part on an emotional level. But once the birthday mass and dinner were done and we all rushed home to watch, stupefied, the collapse of the second tower telecast on CNN, hitting 50 wasn't too bad. In fact it was a relief.

Angst

When I blew out the candles, I blew away all my angst over lost youth, and breathed in hope to become, for the remainder of my exciting life, the best daughter, the best sister, the best friend and the best missionary one could hope to be.

However, I was still negligent—although not totally ignorant—about health issues at this stage of my life, reasoning, "How bad can it get!?" Me, Wonder Woman, who'd curl up on the bathroom floor even at my fittest in Sydney because there was nothing else I could do to combat the pain of dysmenorrhea. I'd often pray to conk out, and did.

Hot water bottles and heating pads, and painkillers until I threw up because I took too many, couldn't help most periods when cramps and nausea took over. But then I'd bounce back all chirpy again and no one knew any better. Add to that, sensitivity and some tears—or at least weepiness—and periods and PMS were a real picnic. It couldn't get any worse than this.

I was wrong!

I was in San Francisco last Nov. 11, comfy-cozy in Mom's condominium in downtown San Jose, Silicon Valley. Great to be reunited with mother, and my youngest sister, Peachy, whom I had nursed for almost two years, and younger brothers Blinky and Doodle and their lovely families. I was in San Jose on a side trip enroute to Canada for a Woman on Fire conference with Gerry Padilla.

Playful bunch

Gerry is s formidable woman of God. Her husband, Frank Padilla, co-founded Couples for Christ. CFC members in San Jose are a playful bunch. We ministered to one another.

On Nov. 12, I began to bleed more than the norm. "How could this be," I wondered, feeling momentarily like the venerable Virgin. I had just finished my menses but required a new set of napkins. Since Casey, Peachy's youngest boy of two whose Kuya is Ira Cruz of Passage Band, was at college as a Dean's Lister, I prevailed upon another nephew/godson, Ian Tambunting.

Ever practical and funny, he exchanged gifts: two huge bags of napkins for *pasalubong* from his parents, my generous Kuya Sonny and Terry. "More than necessary," I thought. However, the two bags grew to three, plus extras from gracious homehosts in Canada, Ding and Malou Bautista.

Ghastly clumps of blood clots, sometimes twice in 30 minutes, began to sap my energy during rehearsals in Toronto, Nov. 16 and 17. While applying magical under-eye concealer on my CFC friends' faces backstage at the glamorous Living Arts Theater on conference night, Nov. 18, more clots.

"This is getting ridiculous," I said to myself in between fantastic songs, dances and testimonies by CFC Canada. I was determined to do my part reasonably well. By God's grace, mission accomplished. ***(To be concluded).***

YOUNG. Love, sympathy—and a lot of expert medical help.

'Istokwa' documents streetkids' hopeless lives

LAZARO. Particularly painful and telling irony.

By Nestor U. Torre

LAST Monday night on GMA-7's "I-Witness," Cheche Lazaro shared with viewers a particularly revealing look at the world of young stowaways, in a one-hour documentary titled "Istokwa."

Cheap highs

The docu started rather predictably with Cheche joining a ragtag band of streetwise kids as they got their cheap highs from sharp blasts of rugby fumes. As they inhaled the lung-frying stuff, they shared bits and pieces of themselves, hitting the TV screen like shrapnel from their imploding lives: running away from a physically abusive father, getting a chop-chop haircut from a *barangay tanod*, living and sleeping in a cemetery.

The last image practically throbbed with particularly painful and telling irony: here were kids at the first blush of life, already lying down with the dead. What a sad portrait of tens of thousands of the country's youth, supposedly the hope of the fatherland, but in actuality already doomed to the grim, hopeless existence of the living dead . . .

But the docu took pains to point out that their landscape was not absolutely bleak, and that the guilt for their situation wasn't exclusively their parents'. Cheche zoomed in on two youths and tried to reunite them with their mothers.

Shy entreaties

The first boy did return to his family's bosom, gaunt though it may have been. But the second stowaway refused to give up the "freedom" of the streets, despite his sickly mother's shy entreaties.

This turned out to be the docu's most numbing tragedy. In an afterword, the docu informed its viewers that, one week after the aborted reunion was taped, the stubborn boy's mother died.

One wondered if the boy returned to their hovel for his mother's wake. Did he finally break down? Or did he remain tough and unfeeling till the end? Of such "little" tragedies is life in the big city compounded, laced with the detritus of unacknowledged pain and loss . .

A contradiction reared its pointy head at this point: Filipinos place great importance on family relationships, so why have those ties become so sundered as far as these young stowaways are concerned? Why do they seek, instead, the scabby embrace of their "family" of the streets?

Culprit

The docu's resource persons point to the culprit: poverty, an impoverishment of the body and heart so draining that it numbs even the fierce importunings of filial love.

The documentary next trained its camera on the lives of *"pang-kape"* streetwalkers, and their sad stories served as weary counterpoints to the younger stowaways' laments. Is this what their severely circumscribed future holds, from watching cars to begging, and then to prostitution—and, after that, to a life of more violent crime?

One naturally wonders what the government and the private sector are doing to save these youths from the woes that are sucking their lives into a downward spiral.

The answer presents itself with bruised resignation: something, but not much. Certainly nowhere near enough to save many of these kids, and to give them a good second start at a better life.

It's documentaries like this that do more than just prompt viewers to charitably go, "Tsk, tsk, how sad," and prod them to care enough to do something about this huge, teeming, many-layered ongoing tragedy.

Let's each try to make a difference in the life of one poor person. If more people take personal action in this way, the complex problem may not be so insoluble, after all.

SWITCHING CHANNELS

Bernard Palanca performs at birthday concert Dec. 17

By Edmund L. Sicam

BERNARD Palanca, a regular of "ASAP" and a proud member of The Hunks, celebrated his 25th birthday last Dec. 3. To mark the special occasion, he is performing with his rock band, the Bisqit Factory, on Dec. 17 at the Hard Rock Cafe in Makati.

His most memorable gift was a trip to Phuket, Thailand courtesy of girlfriend Rica Peralejo. Someday, he hopes to return the favor by gifting her with another beach holiday. It was a fantastic five-day experience for the actor-singer.

With the rising popularity of The Hunks, Bernard has become the subject of intrigue. In the cover photo of the group's album, Bernard was noticeably missing. He said that was unavoidable due to some family event he couldn't forego. There was talk after that that he was leaving The Hunks.

Bernard just laughed off the rumor and said there was no truth to it. He intends to remain with the group and that's that.

Are there plans to settle down with Rica? "Not in the near future," he says. He realizes that both of them have busy careers and this wouldn't be the right time to settle down.

Bernard says he can't bear to watch Rica's love scenes on the screen not because of the nudity but because she's with someone else. He admits he's the jealous type. He has accepted the fact, however, that this is all part of Rica's job so he has no problem with her bold roles.

'Cellphonic Christmas'

Globe Handyphone concluded its "Celebr8" series with an evening of Christmas carols, "A Cellphonic Christmas" last Dec. 11 at the Meralco Theater. The show was telecast on Dec. 13 at 9 p.m. on Studio 23.

The show was one of the rare times we've seen maestro Ryan Cayabyab onstage as he conducted the Philippine Pop Orchestra. Starting off with "Carol of the Bells," Ryan entertained a full-packed theater with symphonic renditions of traditional carols as well as modern ones.

The list of performers was just as impressive. Gary V was there with daughter Kiana singing his original composition, "Once Again It's Christmas" and ending the evening's festivities with an inspiring song on the reason for the season, Jesus Christ. We also enjoyed the *a cappella* renditions of traditional carols by The Company.

Of course, not all the numbers were related to Christmas. The Philippine Madrigal Singers performed their most-requested song, "Circle of Life" from "The Lion King" complete with animal sounds and rhythmic instruments. Then as a tribute to Ryan, who recently won the prestigious Onassis Award in Greece, stage performers led by Kuh Ledesma, Rober Seña, May Bayot, John Arcilla, J.M. Rodriguez and Joy Viado did excerpts from the maestro's stage musicals. It was a rousing performance that electrified the Meralco audience.

Seña and Jett Pangan, names not usually associated with operatic numbers, proved they too could give The Three Tenors a run for their money with their rendition of "O Sole Mio" while Seña sang the much applauded "Nessum Dorma."

It was a fitting conclusion to the telecommunication company's "Celebr8" series.

'Ikaw at Echo'

The grand finals of "Ikaw at Echo" on GMA's "Eat Bulaga" will be held today on the noontime show.

"Ikaw at Echo" is a singing competition where contestants are chosen based on the similarity of their voices to the original singer of the song they interpret. Today, viewers will hear the voices of top local and foreign artists like Toni Braxton, Tom Jones, Johnny Mathis, Karen Carpenter and many others.

PALANCA. Doesn't plan to leave The Hunks.

Due to the popularity of the contest, executives of the noontime show have decided to revive it later, with bigger and better prizes.

Aside from the grand finals, today's show will feature top stars like Dina Bonnevie, Rica Peralejo and singer David Pomeranz.

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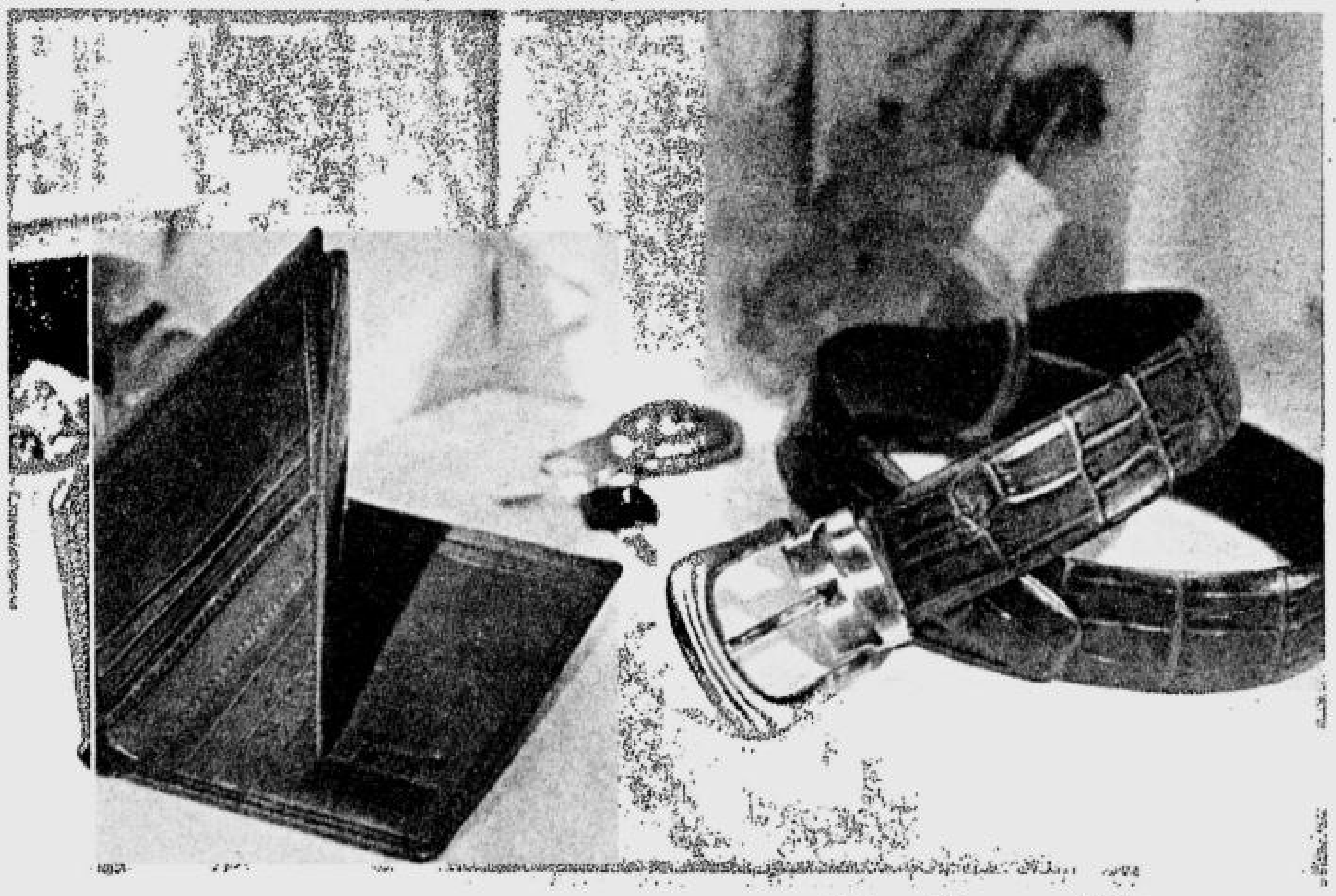

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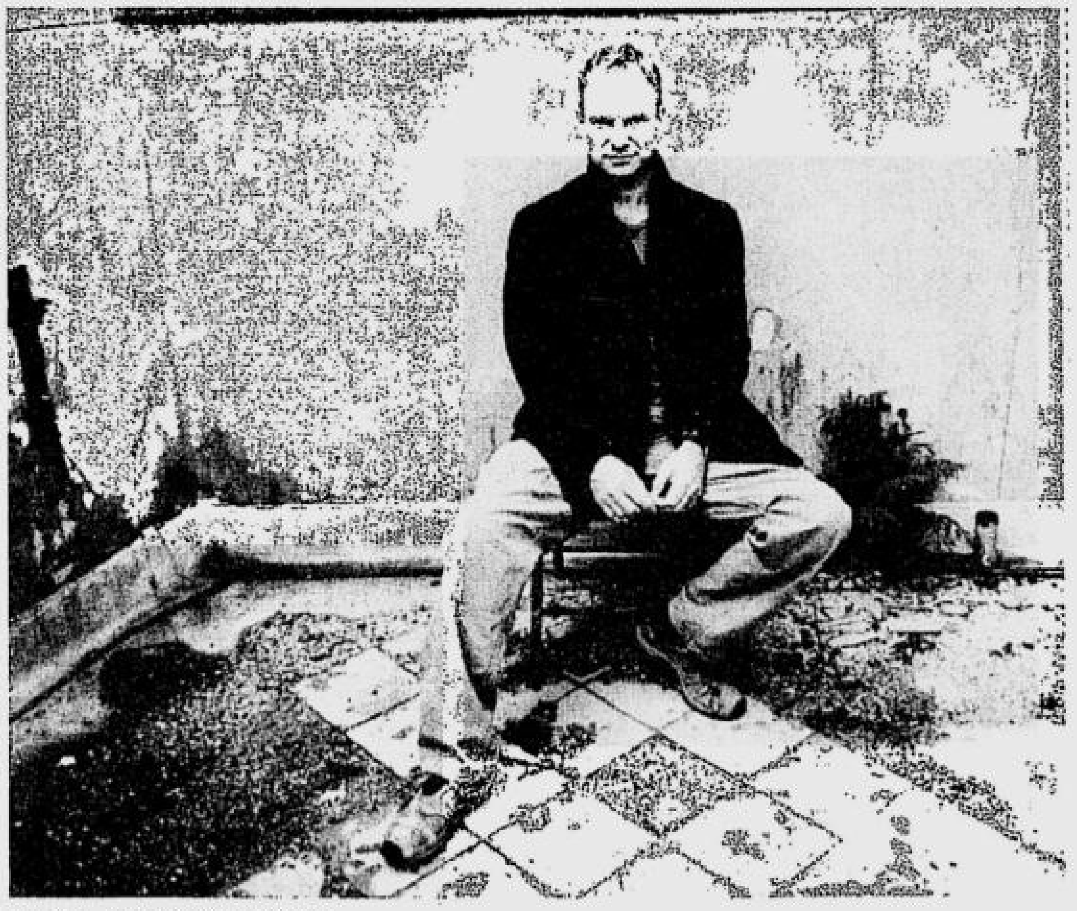

STING. Complex emotions.

Sting dedicates new album . . .

(From page G1)

pine video premiere of Sting's live album, debuting a week earlier than it would be shown to the rest of Asia. After giving away several copies of the CD, which is locally distributed by MCA Universal, the screening began.

After a few songs, though, the DJ-hosts reappeared on the stage to introduce a band called Next Level, and gave the impression to the audience that the rest of the video presentation would be shown later. It never came.

As the next performer, acoustic guitarist-singer Paolo Santos, was introducing his last number, the video screen flashed images of Sting and his band. And that was it. Suddenly, the supposedly momentous event was over.

Fans of Sting can get the full coverage of the concert via a special DVD that also features the rehearsals and a behind-the-scenes documentary on the making of the CD. You can also check out the singer-songwriter-musician's official Website: www.sting.com.

The CD album is sufficient listening pleasure, don't worry. You won't be hearing "Seven Days" and "Message in a Bottle," but it sure is worth your P450.

Emotions

You will still feel the emotions of that fateful day upon hearing the opening strains of "Fragile" and Sting's almost cracking voice (he was trying very hard not to cry). Melancholy rules till the next two songs, "A Thousand Years" and "Perfect Love . . . Gone Wrong."

Things start to lighten up with the fourth song, the jazzed-up version of "All This Time." Then come "The Hounds of Winter," "Mad About You," "Don't Stand So Close To Me," "When We Dance" and "Dienda."

By the 10th track ("Roxanne"), Sting, with his 12 musicians and two back-up vocalists, has the listener totally hooked. But there's more: "(If You Love Someone) Set Them Free," "Brand New Day," "Fields of Gold," "Moon Over Bourbon Street," "If I Ever Lose My Faith In You" and finally an upbeat version of "Every Breath You Take."

You are only reminded of the tragedy as you leaf through the CD cover. Sting reiterates that the live album is respectfully dedicated to all those who lost their lives on Sept, 11.

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SMART

Simply Amazing!

Promo Mechanics for SMART Buddy Subscribers:

1. All active SMART Buddy (pre-paid) subscribers in good standing are eligible to participate.
2. To join, SMART Buddy subscribers must register via text. To register, key in CHRISTMAS <name>/<address>/<region> and send to 211.
   Region codes: Luzon-LZ, Visayas-VS, Mindanao-MN, Metro Manila-MM
   Subscribers will be charged ₱2.50 per message sent.
3. The cellular phone number of SMART Buddy subscribers will serve as their raffle entry. There can only be one registered name per cellular phone number. Once a subscriber joins, no one else will be allowed to register using the same cellular phone number unless he quits the promo. In the event that the winning cellular phone number was registered under two users within the same month of the promo duration, the current registered name will be recognized. However, one person can register several cellular phone numbers at one time.
4. All registered participants can earn raffle entries in three easy ways:

•Via Smart Buddy Reloads

• Every reload entitles the subscriber to earn raffle entries. The number of raffle entries earned is determined by the cumulative value of reloads at the end of each month as illustrated below:

CUMULATIVE RELOAD VALUE* PER SUBSCRIBER (PER MONTH)	RAFFLE ENTRY(IES)
₱300	1
₱500	5
₱800	12
₱1,000	20
every ₱300 beyond the 1st ₱1,000	5

*Note: Pre-paid reloading via Call & Text Card, SMART Money and SMART Mobile Banking is entitled to raffle entries. Raffle entries earned through reloads will be credited after the end of each month (e.g. all entries earned for November will be reflected in a subscriber's raffle entry balance by December 1 only).

•Via Activation

•Each new SMART Buddy SIM card activation during the promo period entitles the subscriber to one (1) entry. The raffle entry earned will be credited at the end of the month.

•All activations for the duration of the promo period will be awarded raffle entries for as long as the subscriber has duly registered for the promo.

•Via SMART IDD

•Every IDD call that reaches a minimum of three (3) minutes in duration is entitled to 3 entries.

5. To view the number of raffle entries earned, key in CHRISTMAS and send to 211.
   Rate per CHRISTMAS RAFFLE INQUIRY is ₱2.50.
6. All entries earned for a particular month will be included in the monthly draw for the same period only. However, all entries not drawn are still qualified for the grand draw on January 11, 2002.
7. The participant can also opt to quit from the promo. To quit, key in CHRISTMAS QUIT and send it to 211. To register the number under a different name, the participant should repeat the registration steps. All valid entries made prior to quitting will still be included in the monthly and grand draw under the registered name.
   Rate for CHRISTMAS QUIT is ₱2.50

Promo Mechanics for SMART GOLD Subscribers:

1. Eligible individual or corporate SMART Gold (post-paid) subscribers can participate in the 2nd preliminary draw and grand draw following their billing cycles.
2. SMART Gold individual, corporate and government subscribers need not register, as they will be automatically included in the promo.
3. If a subscription is under a corporate or government account, in case it is drawn, the prize will be given to the corporate or government account.
4. The cellular phone number will serve as the raffle entry.
5. All registered participants can earn raffle entries in three easy ways:

• Via Monthly Service Fee

• A SMART Gold subscriber exceeding a prescribed minimum monthly billing requirement earns him/her raffle entries.

• For every ₱250 in excess of the minimum billing requirement of each plan, a Gold subscriber earns additional 5 raffle entries.

GOLD PLAN (current)	GOLD PLAN (old)	MINIMUM MONTHLY BILLING	RAFFLE ENTRY
300 (Corporate)	40	₱1,000	20
600	80	₱1,500	30
1,200	120 & 160	₱2,500	50
1,800	200 & 500	₱3,000	60
3,000	750	₱4,500	90
4,000	1,000	₱6,000	120

• For example, a Gold subscriber under Plan 600 has a billing of ₱2,500 he/she will earn a total of 50 raffle entries.

Plan	Minimum Monthly Billing Req.	Raffle Entry
Plan 600	₱1,500	30+20 = 50 raffle entries

Excess of ₱1,000 / 250 x 5 = 20

• Via Activation

•Each SMART Gold activation entitles the subscriber to one (1) entry.

•Via SMART IDD

• Every IDD call that reaches a minimum of three (3) minutes in duration is entitled to 3 raffle entries.

6. To view the number of raffle entries that you have earned, key in CHRISTMAS and send to 211. For SMART Gold, balances will be updated at the end of the billing cycle.
   Rate per CHRISTMAS RAFFLE INQUIRY is ₱2.50.

GENERAL Promo Mechanics for SMART Buddy and SMART Gold Subscribers:

1. The draw dates and prizes are as follows:

DRAW DATES	PERIOD COVERED	PRIZES
Dec. 5, 2001 (For SMART Buddy Only)	Nov. 1 -30, 2001 (For SMART Buddy Only)	• Five (5) winners who can choose from three (3) showcases • Winners will be distributed geographically as follows: 1 winner each from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao; and 2 winners from Metro Manila
Jan. 10, 2002 (For SMART Buddy and SMART Gold)	Dec. 1-31, 2001 (For SMART Buddy and SMART Gold)	• Ten (10) winners who can choose from three (3) showcases • Winners will be distributed geographically as follows: 2 winners each from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao; and 4 winners from Metro Manila
GRAND DRAW: Jan. 11, 2002	Nov. 1, 2001 – December 31, 2001	One (1) GRAND PRIZE WINNER OF ₱2,000,000 IN CASH – TAX-FREE

Showcase 1:	Travel/Shopping for 5 persons in Bangkok or Hong Kong plus US$2,000 pocket money. This package includes 4 days and 3 nights accommodation plus round-trip airfare.
Showcase 2:	Digital Dream Showcase (Nokia 9210, DCR-TRV30 Sony Video Camera, Sony Digital Still Camera, Compaq iPAQ and Sony Play Station II)
Showcase 3:	Home Theater Showcase Sony Wega 48" (121.92cm) Projection TV and Pioneer HTD1 Home Theater System which includes 5-disc DVD/CD changer, satellite speakers, center speaker and an active subwoofer)

2. All the prizes are TAX-FREE. If a showcase winner wants to convert his/her prize to cash, they will be given ₱175,000.00.
3. A winner may only win once every raffle draw.
4. The promo is from November 21 to December 31, 2001. All activations, reloads and IDD calls made since Nov. 1, 2001 are included in the promo.
5. Winners shall be notified thru the following means:
   a. Text Message.
   b. Registered Mail
6. Winners within Metro Manila may claim their prizes at the SMART Tower, 6799 Ayala Ave., Makati City. Provincial winners can claim their prizes at the nearest SMART office indicated in the register mail.
7. Winners must present their active SMART GSM celfone and SIM card, valid I.D. with photo and registered mail when claiming their prizes.
8. All employees of SMART Communications, Inc., Pilipino Telephone Corporation, and their advertising agencies and relatives up to the 2nd degree of affinity or consanguinity are automatically disqualified from the promo.
9. The raffle will be held at the 27/F, SMART Tower, 6799 Ayala Ave., Makati City. Draws will be held at 12NN on December 5, January 10 and January 11.
10. Prizes should be claimed within 60 days from notification of winners.

*Actual prizes may vary from the ones shown.

SMART GOLD GSM

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AM/FM

Of misguided benevolence and losing a radio show

By Rito P. Asilo

WHEN we tuned in to Angel Radyo's "Gabay ng Bayan, Kilos Kabayan" (1026 kHz on AM), we chanced upon a heated forum that the two hosts, Len Flores Sumera and Ariel Fernandez, were moderating for their listeners. The question was, "Should the Sandiganbayan allow former President Estrada to take a 10-day vacation?"

Repetitive

A lot of the answers were so repetitive and lame, sometimes even blatantly moronic, that a listener couldn't help but sigh. But more than the answers that begged for sarcasm, we were horrified to find out that the "yes" votes won over the "no."

It is not only a matter of preferential treatment but a simple question of law. To assure that people get a fair trial, the law decides if suspects can be released on bail or not, depending on the gravity of their case. Detention prevents flight. Assuming that a person is innocent until proven guilty is one thing, but to be overtly tolerant about abuse is another. That is why we have laws—to establish order.

Tolerant

On the pro side, the word "humanitarian" was in constant use. They said that the former president is not a menace to society, and that as Filipinos, we need to be tolerant enough to have him share the holidays with his family.

The other side argued that, should the former President be given options that others behind bars can't enjoy, then everyone who is still awaiting a court decision but is already languishing in jail should also be freed. One caller could not believe how we use our tolerance over issues that may affect the future of our children. He pleaded, "*Mag-isip naman kayo!*"

The next caller readily said, "*Siya na lang mag-isip! Basta dapat palayain na ang Presidente.*" That was pretty straight—and obvious, if you ask us!

Another said that political prisoners should all be released this Christmas, and that Erap was one of them.

One person wondered if the listeners who voted for Erap's temporary release knew how grave "plunder" raps were. He explained, "*Mga kapatid,* this offense affects all of us, not just a single person!" He said that if we can't follow our own laws, we should stop making laws altogether.

But we knew that some listeners' sanity had left them when one of them, in answer to the very clear question at hand, said; "*Dapat magkaroon ng eleksiyon kasi hindi naman natin ibinotong Presidente si* Gloria, *e! Walang* political stability *hanggang walang* election!"

We almost fell from our chair, and apparently, so have the hosts. *Hello?* Some people

OF MISGUIDED/ p. G7

FROM left, Jun-June and wife Armel, Caroline, Franklin, Carlo and Amy.

SEATED, Jun-June with wife Armel and baby, Angel, Arse and Anton. Behind, from left, are Lorraine, Carlo, Frank and Caroline.

You can never put Frank Evaristo down

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

FRANK Evaristo is an entrepreneur, civic leader, writer, friend and best of all, a dedicated father to his children. A sense of fulfillment overwhelms Frank whenever he sees his children who helped him overcome the stubborn tides that have rocked his life.

Lightness

Frank's newfound "singlehood" becomes him. There is a lightness in Frank's stride that makes you want to pat him on the shoulder and say, "You've done well."

And he has. Frank has rewarded his semi-retired, once-again-bachelor life with residence at the ultra-exclusive Rockwell Center. His personality is reflected in the design of his bachelor's pad—classic contemporary with studied pieces of neo-Asian accents and accessories.

On most mornings he is usually walking his dogs, putting in hours on the treadmill or doing laps in the swimming pool. Afternoons he attends Alay Lakad Foundation meetings or he is in press conferences for his specially selected clients. Evenings, he shuttles from one social function to another. Among these are Rotary fellowships, fundraisers and embassy parties. Weekends are spent with his kids and his grandchildren over lunch, or on trips to the mall.

His kids: the eldest is businessman Jun Jun is married to Armelle Peled and they have four children: Anton-8, Arse-6, Angel-3, and Allie-2 months.

Carol, 30, speaks Italian, French and Spanish. A lecturer in a business school she completed her masters at SDA Bocconi in Milan, Italy and currently works as a banker.

Nature lover

Amy, 29, works as AVP at Mega World Properties and has a degree in Humanities from De la Salle University. For seven years Amy managed Collectiones New York and is a nature lover.

Frank's youngest son is Carlo, 22, who graduated from De la Salle University with a degree in Hotel Restaurant Institution Management and is currently the manager of the family-owned Collectiones New York boutique, which recently celebrated its 32nd anniversary. Carlo plans to take up further studies in haute couture to complement their fashion business.

For several years, Frank was a tourism and diplomatic beat writer. He has had the opportunity to travel and visit strange and familiar countries alike. There were spiritual sojourns to Jerusalem, idyllic interludes in the streets of Paris, introspective visits to Italy, as well as to the pyramids and catacombs of Egypt.

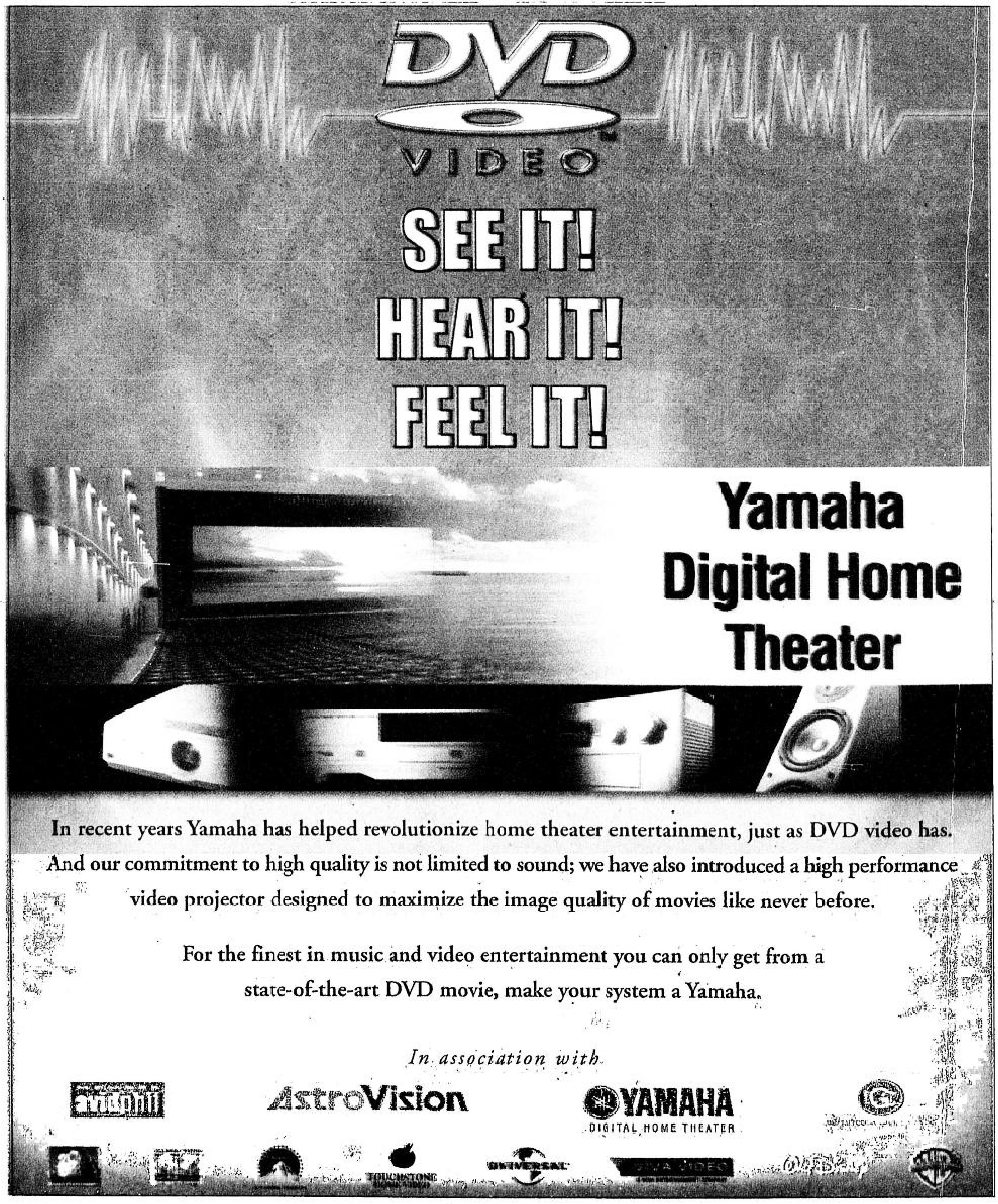
Glory days

After college, Frank went to New York, studied at Fordham University for his MBA and lived in Manhattan for 10 years during the glory days of Studio 54, even as he worked in an international bank.

Among his other achievements are his stints as national president of the Philippine Jaycees and of the Rotary Club. Today, his chief philanthropic work is with the Alay Lakad, a nationwide organization binding the public and private sectors as it conducts walks-for-a-cause all over the country.

Frank and Alay Lakad have nearly become synonymous. Ever charitable, he can be depended on to lend a helping hand to poor and opportunity-challenged but talented individuals. There's the saying, "You can never put a good man down," seems to be meant just for Franklin Evaristo.

Happy Birthday, old boy!



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Get ready for more polemics at MMFF 2001

By Ricky T. Gallardo

BAGATSING. Best actor at Asian TV Awards.

NOW that the official entries films have been selected for the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF), expect a lot of fun as more controversies are sure to unravel as the event progresses.

Even before this year's entries were announced, eyebrows were already raised regarding the sure entry of the film "Di Kita Ma-Reach," starring presidential son Mikey Arroyo. True enough, the movie produced by E-Corp Movie Ventures made it to the Magic Seven. As to whether the film will attract moviegoers is an entirely different matter.

The Monteverdes' Regal machinery was able to produce an unprecedented three films for this year's filmfest: Chito Roño's "Yamashita," Joel Lamangan's "'Hubog," and Uro de la Cruz's "Bahay ni Lola." The three enjoyed preliminary publicity weeks before the announcement of the official entries.

Tikoy Aguiluz's "Tatarin" is Viva's entry and their camp has been hailing this movie as Dina Bonnevie's best. Although the film is shaping up as the underdog this year, statistics show that Viva is not so lucky with their filmfest entries when it comes to awards garnered.

Star Cinema is banking on the over-used tandem of Marilou Abaya and Cesar Montano for their entry "Bagong Buwan."

The final entry is titled "Susmaryosep (Four Fathers)" from Maverick Films by editor-turned-megman Boy Vinarao. There's 10 days left for this movie to create some noise.

It's not all dim news though because we welcome the non-inclusion of Jinggoy Estrada's "Peksman, Walang Iwanan" which pairs him with Judy Ann Santos. After Juday's winning streak, this film should be frozen because it could spell disaster for her blossoming career.

Happy for Raymond B.

Raymond Bagatsing's big win at the Asian TV Awards in Singapore is certainly good news. Bagatsing won as Best Drama Actor for his felt performance as a distonia-inflicted man in a well-crafted episode of "Maalaala Mo Kaya."

We understand his manager's penchant for theater but we reckon that Bagatsing should limit his stints on stage by appearing in only one major project a year. He should concentrate on making movies, where his talent is badly needed.

Brussels top acting award(s) —A big joke?

ZHANG ZIYI. Commercial for Visa.

By all logic, a actor should—and cannot—not win as Best Actress. But in the Brussels International Film Festival, where Filipinos keep on winning acting awards year after year after year, three Filipino actors were in a three-way tie for the Best *Actress* plum—after also being declared as triple winners in the Best Actor category.

Dolphy, his sons Eric and Jeffrey, were presented one trophy each for their performances in "Markova."

GET READY/P. G7

Ryan Cayabyab honored in modern 'Olympics of the arts'

BY NESTOR U. TORRE

THE ALEXANDER Onassis International Cultural Competition is only four years old, but it is already regarded as one of the world's top creative awards, a sort of Olympics of the arts. How fitting then, that the competition is based in Greece, not just the site of the Olympics, but also the historic wellspring of artistic endeavor.

CAYABYAB. Right up there with the best of them.

International masters

Last Nov. 27, our very own Ryan Cayabyab took his place among the current international masters of the specialized collaborative art of musical composition for choreographed dance, sharing second place with a British composer.

Along with Ryan's wife Emmy, Philip Cu-unjieng and I were on hand to support, applaud and empathetically bask in the glow of this latest affirmation of the important place and high achievement of the Filipino artist on the international stage.

What makes the relatively new Onassis culture awards so highly prized? Aside from its noteworthy Greek origins, its link to Aristotle Onassis (Alexander's father), and its rigorous selection process, the awards' very substantial cash component is clearly a strong motivating factor for the world's top artists to join this competition.

Most other international arts competitions award only a fraction of the Onassis Awards' munificent prize, so interest in the Onassis awards is particularly keen in arts circles.

Conquering heroes

In addition, laureates are treated like conquering heroes of the arts, flown to Greece for a week of immersion, celebration, libation—name it, the Greeks sure know how to make laureates feel like they're demigods who, for at least a few golden days and nights, have taken up residence on an artistic Parnassus.

As a member of Ryan's entourage (he would be extremely nervous at our use of the word, and would prefer the less lofty substitute, "group"—but let's compromise on the less stolid "accompanying party"), we had a ringside seat at this significant event.

We saw how the Greeks respected and valued artists, and honored them in a special way. The minute we arrived in Athens, we were given the red-carpet treatment—happily, with none of the artificial sycophancy that sometimes attends international events of this sort.

The Greeks' natural warmth and interest in different cultures quickly asserted itself, and made the laureates and their accompanying parties feel not just welcome, but also valued.

Rich culture

They were also eager to share their own rich culture. There was no time for us to savor Greek hstory, but we were taken to the Benaki Museum and the Museum of Cycladic Art.

The first museum had a number of fascinating exhibits, topped by a room full of powerful, glowing and fiercely spiritual icons, including some by El Greco.

At the Cycladic Art Museum, the big surprise was the exhibit of thousand-year-old artifacts and burial sculptures that looked like they might have been carved by modern-day artists like Brancussi and Modigliani.

Heno de Pravia

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   - One (1) back label of Heno de Pravia Agua de Colonia

   On the empty pack, print your name, address, phone numbers and signature.
3. If you're sending a back label, stick it at the back of the photo. Write your name, address, phone numbers, and signature on a separate piece of paper.
   Mail entries to:

HENO DE PRAVIA
Search for Image Models 3
P.O. Box 19400 San Juan, MM

Lucky Searchers can win P30,000 worth of prizes.

1. Attach 1 close-up (3R, most recent) photo of your Image Model to any of the above-mentioned proofs of purchase.
2. At the back of the photo, print the name of your Image Model candidate. On the empty pack, print your name, address, phone nos. and signature. Mail entries to the address above.

Lucky Senders can win up to P60,000.

1. Lucky Senders are entries without photos attached, and are eligible only for the 3 bimonthly draws of P20,000 each. Write your name, address, phone nos., and signature on any of the above-mentioned HDP proofs of purchase. Mail entries to the same address.
2. Non-winning Image Model and Lucky Searcher entries are also qualified for the draws. So send as many entries as you can!

** Entries must be received at least 5 days before the screening-draw dates: (1st) Jan. 16, 2002; (2nd) Mar. 18, 2002; (3rd) May 16, 2002*

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PROMO DETAILS:
The nationwide promo runs from Nov. 17, 2001 to May 17, 2002

Pre-screening for qualifiers:
All entries received will be screened by client, agency, and DTI rep. every 2 mos. The bimonthly Lucky Sender winner will be drawn from the Lucky Sender and non-winning Image Model/Lucky Searcher entries.

Criteria for pre-screening:
Photogenic quality and image projection - 50%
Beauty (*For males: Appeal*) - 50%
Must possess a beautiful (or handsome) face with clear complexion.

Selection of Finalists:
Only 10 final candidates (5 males, 5 females) who meet the cut-off score of 85% will be chosen for the final judging.

Final Image Model candidates and their Lucky Searchers (if any) will be notified by registered mail. They must confirm their participation on or before May 24, 2002.

The Lucky Searchers will have to show their registered mail and present a valid ID on the screening date.

Final Screening:
The 10 official candidates will undergo VTR and photo sessions on May 31, 2002 at Horizon Edsa Hotel. Judges will determine the official HDP Image Models.

Criteria for final screening:
Personality - 50%
Beauty (Appeal for Males) - 40%
Talent - 10%

Announcement of Winners:
Awarding of Image Model/Lucky Searcher winners will be on June 1, 2002 in one of Manila's prestigious malls.

Prizes:
Image Models: each receives P100,000 in cash *plus P10,000 worth of local & imported Gal products.*

Lucky Searchers (if any): each receives P20,000 in cash *plus P10,000 worth of local & imported Gal products.*

Lucky Senders: each receives P20,000 in cash.

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Treats on television for the holiday season

EDEN Project on the National Geographic Channel:

Learn about the Eden Project, the world's largest greenhouse being created in a clay pit in Cornwall on National Geographic on two consecutive Tuesdays (Dec. 18 and 25) at 8 p.m.

The world's largest greenhouse will be a string of geodesic domes around the world. From Mediterranean olives to the rainforests of the Amazon and the temperate species of its English home, the Eden Project seeks to teach the "vital relationship between plants, people and resources, leading towards a sustainable future for all "

The great African hunt

On Wednesday, Dec. 19 at 9 p.m. meet Dr. Tyrone Hayes as he makes a mad dash around the southern portion of Lake Victoria to study African reed frogs and their critical role in the battle against cancer.

Climate flip

It is becoming clear that the world may be coming to the end of an unusually stable 100,000-year period of climatic stability. The prediction is that we are about to return to a time when massive climate flips were regular events. If so, what does this mean for modern man? Watch National Geographic Channel on Friday, Dec. 21 at 9 p.m. to find out.

Diving technology

Meet scientist Richard Pyle, a marine biology researcher for the Bishop Museum in Hawaii on National Geographic Channel on Friday, Dec. 21 at 10 p.m. He has developed the "re-breather," a device which allows him to safely explore reefs almost 500 feet below the surface, discovering dozens of new species of fish and expanding the current scope of marine biology textbooks.

RUSSLE Crowe co-stars with Al Pacino in 'The Insider.'

'Managua' on Star Movies

Craving for more tales of combat? Adrenaline will flow through your veins with "Managua," showing on Wednesday, Dec. 19 at 9 p.m. Paul Gleason (Louis Gossett Jr.) has been sent to Nicaragua to recover the body of a friend and colleague, Dennis Rice, who is presumed to be dead. However, a meeting with Dennis' fiancée and the head of state security makes Paul believe that Dennis is not dead, after all.

In Metro Manila, Star Movies is available on Destiny Cable, Las Piñas Cable, Parañaque Cable and the DTH Dream Broadcasting Service.

'The Insider'

Academy-Award-winners Russell Crowe and Al Pacino join forces to expose the No.1 public health scandal of the century in "The Insider," showing on Star Movies on Saturday, Dec. 22 at 9 p.m. Top tobacco scientist Jeffrey Wigand, played by Crowe, goes public with the secret that the industry has kept hidden for years: cigarettes were designed to be addictive. But the campaign of humiliation and harassment to keep Wigand quiet prompts journalist Lowell Bergman (Al Pacino) to free Wigand and reveal the truth.

'Plunkett and Macleane'

Top Brit talent from the "Full Monty" and rock aristocracy Aerosmith's equally famous daughter come together in the period thriller "Plunkett and Macleane," showing on Star Movies on Sunday, Dec. 23 at 9 p.m. The film tells the story of two notorious highwaymen who prey upon the members of wealthy society.

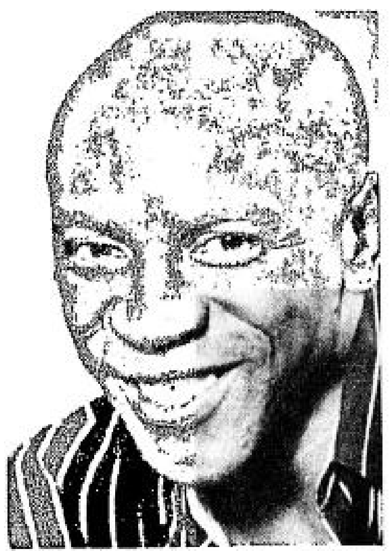
With Plunkett's (Robert Carlyle) brains and Macleane's (Jonny Lee Miller) social connections, they are able to hold up the coaches of the aristocracy. Along the way, Macleane falls in love with the niece (Liv Tyler) of one of his victims.

'Christmas Comes To Willow Creek'

Can the holiday spirit of goodwill and hope prevail? Two feuding brothers want to put their differences aside in "Christmas Comes To Willow Creek," showing on Star Movies on Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 9 p.m. John Schneider and Tom Wopat co-star.

'High Explosive'

Patrick Bergin stars as retired US Army Capt. Jack Randall in "High Explosive, showing on Star Movies on Wednesday, Dec. 26 at 9 p.m. He is in Angola for PALM (People Against Land Mines) to rid the country of the deadly hidden explosives. But rebels attack Jack's camp in an effort to drive him and his son out of the country.



LOU Gossett Jr. topbills "Managua."

Hopper, Snipes and Mortensen

Three generation of action stars Dennis Hopper ("Easy Rider"), Wesley Snipes ("Blade") and Viggo Mortensen ("The Perfect Murder") star in the action-packed "Boiling Point," showing on Star Movies on Saturday, Dec. 29 at 9 p.m.

Dennis Hopper and Mortensen are dubbed "money men" because they illegally print money. At the same time they are avenging the death of their slain partner by blowing up their rivals. Cornered in a hotel stakeout, the hoods have to choose between rubbing out their biggest rival and saving their own lives.

'Top 100 Music Videos of 2001' on Channel [V] Int'l.

Channel [V] Int'l. embarks on its annual "Top 100 Music Videos" of the year with Parts 1-5 on Monday to Friday, Dec. 17 to 21 at 11 a.m., 2 p.m. and 10 p.m., and Parts 6-10 on Monday to Friday, Dec. 24 to 28 at 11 a.m., 2 p.m. and 10 p.m.

Featured are the best videos that viewers specially liked this year.

'The Juice Special—Usher 2001'

Ladies, prepare yourselves as Channel [V] Int'l. gets up close and personal with the "King of the Smooth Groove" in "The Juice Special—Usher 2001" on Wednesday, Dec. 19 at 8 p.m. (With replay on Thursday, Dec. 20 at 12:30 p.m.)

The one-hour special takes viewers backstage to see the making of the videos for his monster hit "U Remind Me." Also, the "main man" talks about his new album "8701," and takes viewers through his best-known tracks.

"5IVE" 2001

Channel [V] Int'l. presents one whole hour of "5IVE" mania on Thursday, Dec. 20 at 5 p.m. (with replay on Sunday, Dec. 23 at 10 a.m.).

Although the band has split up recently, its fans will still enjoy seeing Abs, J, Ritchie, Scott & Sean in hilarious behind-the-scenes footage on the making of their last video, "Let's Dance." The boys also perform some of their most popular hits, including "Keep on Moving," "When The Lights Go Out," "Everybody Get Up" and "Slam Dunk Your Funk."

'The Ticket—End of Year Special'

The topsy-turvy film world shows no signs of slowing down. So, catch "The Ticket—End of Year Special" for a two-part look back at Film Year 2001 on Channel [V] Int'l. Part 1 airs on Friday, Dec. 21 at 6:30 p.m. (with replays on Saturday, Dec. 22 at 12 mid. and Sunday, Dec. 23 at 2 p.m. and 11 p.m.) and Part 2 on Friday, Dec. 28 at 6:30 p.m. (replays on Saturday, Dec. 29 at 12 midnight, and Sunday, Dec. 30 at 2 p.m. and 11 p.m.).

'Asha & Adrian's Christmas Crackers'

Everyone loves music and VJs Asha and Adrian are no exception. The dynamic duo brings viewers their favorite videos of 2001. Which bands will figure in Adrian's pick? Who will Asha plump for? Radiohead? Britney? Travis? Catch "Asha & Adrian's Christmas Crackers" on Channel [V] Int'l. on Tuesday, Dec. 25 at 12 nn.

'Bob Marley'

Channel [V] Int'l. jams with the godfather of reggae music, Bob Marley, with back-to-back specials, "The Bob Marley Story on Wednesday, Dec. 26 at 12 nn and 12 mn. and "Bob Marley & The Wailers, Live at The Rainbow, I Know A Place" at 3 p.m. and 1 a.m.

Channel [V] Int'l. delivers a symbol of "Freedom" with "The Bob Marley Story" on Wednesday, Dec. 26, 12 nn and 12 mn. This documentary chronicles the life of one of the most political and inspirational musicians of our time, from his childhood days in the ghetto to achieving global superstar status.

Catch Bob Marley and the Wailers spreading their musical message on Channel [V] Int'l. with the special program "Bob Marley & The Wailers, Live at The Rainbow, I Know A Place" on Wednesday, Dec. 26 at 3 p.m. and 1 a.m. "Bob Marley and the Wailers Live at the Rainbow" in 1977 is remembered by many as a highlight of the decade.

'Joseph and His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat' on Star World

Star World presents a special performance of the magical "Joseph and His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" on Monday, Dec. 24 at 9 p.m. (With replays on Tuesday, Dec. 25 at 12:30 a.m. and 12 p.m.)

Donny Osmond stars in the title role of Joseph alongside Joan Collins and Sir Richard Attenborough.

A celebration of magic and color for the whole family, "Joseph and His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" is the first musical collaboration between Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, which helped launch their musical careers.

'Segurista' on Viva Cinema

Former Miss Asia-Pacific Michelle Aldana stars in her first daring film, "Segurista" on Viva Cinema on Thursday, Dec. 20 at 8 p.m., also starring Gary Estrada, Ruby Moreno, Julio Diaz and Albert Martinez. Michelle plays a victim of Mount Pinatubo who comes to Manila to work as an insurance underwriter by day and a guest relation officer by night. Things go well for her until she falls in love with one of her regular customers.

In Metro Manila, Viva Cinema is available on Destiny Cable, Las Piñas Cable, Parañaque Cable, and the DTH Dream Broadcasting Service.

'Sharon . . . On-Stage'

Catch the megastar with special guest Ronnie Raymundo in "Sharon. . . On-Stage: One Night Only," on Viva Cinema on Friday, Dec. 21 at 8 p.m. The concert includes Sharon's thoughts on courtship, being in love and being Sharon Cuneta.

'Episode 2: Pedro Penduko'

Janno Gibbs stars as a descendant of a legendary hero in "Episode 2: Pedro Penduko," airing on Viva Cinema on Saturday, Dec. 22 at 8 p.m. Unwittingly, Pedro finds himself in a kingdom in need of a hero. Though initially unwilling to get involved, Pedro soon discovers the hero in himself and leads the people in their struggle to prevent an invasion.

'Juanita Banana'

Rosemarie Sonora and Ricky Belmonte star in "Juanita Banana," showing on Saturday, Dec. 22 at 8 a.m. There is a folk belief that catching a teardrop from a banana tree's heart will give a person magical powers. Rosemarie tries this tactic against her cruel stepmother played by Bella Flores. Help comes to her by way of a dwarf, Prince Riktik (Ricky Belmonte), who wants to marry her. Will she exchange her boyfriend Gordo (Pepito Rodriguez) for the life of a pampered princess?

'Isla'

Beauty queen Maria Isabel Lopez stars in "Isla," showing on Saturday, Dec. 22 at 12 midnight. One of Celso Ad Castillo's masterpieces, the film tells about a young island maiden who has all men lusting after her. Her dream is to leave her primitive surroundings and find another life in the big city. To be able to escape she must use her body to pay off all of the men who want to possess her.

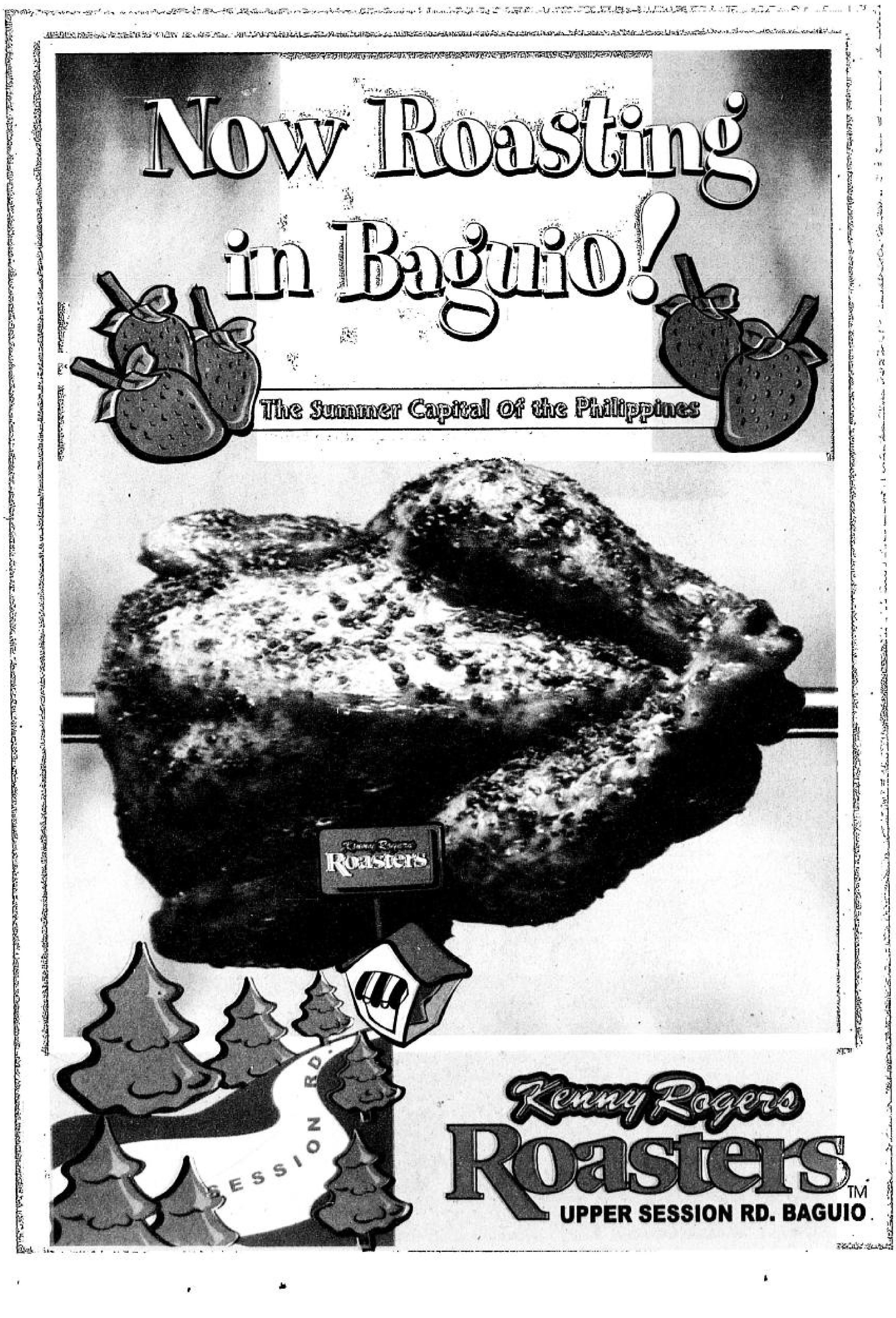
'The Flor Contemplacion Story'

Superstar Nora Aunor stars in "The Flor Contemplacion Story," showing on Viva Cinema on Sunday, Dec. 23 at 8 p.m. This tragic tale of the Filipino domestic worker executed for murder in Singapore in 1995 called attention to the plight of Filipino overseas workers.

'Lakas at Pag-ibig'

Gladys Reyes, Patrick Guzman and Marjie Dizon star in "Lakas at Pag-ibig," showing on Viva Cinema on Sunday, Dec. 23 at midnight. The film tells the story of a sexy actress who cannot accept the reality of a declining career. One day, she and her lover-driver meet an accommodating family. But men fall under Melody's spell and she uses them to make women virtual slaves. Up to when can Melody and her entourage get away with this disgraceful behavior?

MICHELLE Aldana plays the title role in "Segurista."



Belinda Panelo is TV's latest 'contravida'

By Andy Bais

VJ Belinda Panelo never stops trying until she succeeds. When she failed to bag the judges' nod on her initial attempt to becoming a VJ, she tried again the very next time the search was conducted. That time around, she romped off with the prized contract.

PANELO. Learning experience.

Product endorser

Unknown to many, this much-sought-after product endorser also tried her luck as television actress way back in 1996. Unfortunately, it didn't work out the way she wanted it to. According to her, it was such a bad experience that she is ashamed to tell us the title of the TV program she briefly appeared in.

But, true to her belief that there's always a second chance, she recently tried acting on television again.

And so far, she is doing quite well.

Belinda is the latest addition to the growing number of lovely women (and with bodies to die for, too!) who grace the local TV screens as *contravidas*. She is currently enjoying her stint as Isabel, the other woman in Piolo Pascual's life, in ABS-CBN's hit soap drama "Sa Puso Ko, Iingatan Ka" which has Judy Ann Santos as headliner.

Acting has always been Belinda's passion. Before she became a VJ, she appeared in a number of theater productions. This was put on hold, however, when she became very busy with her hosting chores as one of MTV Asia's VJs.

Opportunity

She really missed acting, however. So, when the opportunity came for her to read for a role in the TV drama, she didn't have second thoughts. "Actually, I didn't look for the role. One of the TV drama's production people called up Boy Abunda, my manager," she recalls.

Boy thought it was a nice role, so she agreed to audition.

Belinda's determination to seriously consider acting on television again must have inspired her to do well in her reading for the part. As a result, the TV drama's first director, Joey Reyes, was so impressed with her that she was told to start taping the very next day!

Belinda intimated that she was trying to get away from being typecast as a *contravida*. "But then, I thought that I am a performer, and as such, this was just a role that I would play. I also thought of it as a challenge, a different role, and I was also excited working with different people, " she adds.

One other reason why she decided to act on television again was the taping schedule, which does not get in the way of her regular stint as a VJ. She only gets to tape twice a week which is fine with her.

Belinda considers her TV series as the one that has the most number of *contravidas*. "There's Armida Siguion-Reyna, Alma Concepcion, Julia Clarete and recently Rosemarie Gil. At least, I feel that the weight is not on me—*na ako lang ang* mastermind *ng kasamaan*," she laughs.

Broad gestures

What was her first day of taping like? "Feeling ko, *sobra akong* OA. We all know that TV dramas are *talagang* dramatic. For example, *sa* lines *pa lang*, nobody talks like that. *Parang* it was really hard for me, since I was used to doing broad gestures in the theater. On my first day of taping, I was really worried, *kasi dapat* small movements *dahil naha*-highlight *naman yun ng* camera.

"Doing my first scene, I felt so awkward *kasi yung mga kausap ko nasa likuran ko at sa* camera *ako nakikipag-usap*. They told me what I did was OK, but I felt it was too much," she muses.

She shares that the veteran actors in the TV drama are the nicest people she has worked with. "I really get along well with Armida despite her reputation as *mataray*. Yes, she is *mataray*, but only *kung may kapalpakan na mangyayari sa* set. But other than that, I think she is nice and even adorable.

"She's a funny lady actually, *nakakatuwa ang mga* side comments niya about many things," she adds.

Belinda considers her new-found role in the TV drama as a learning experience. "I tell you, *dati di ko talaga alam* how TV dramas were done. I didn't realize that in two days, we would do all of the shows for the entire week; that every shot is usually take one *lang*. So, *kailangang* always ready *ka* for the next scene, memorized *mo na ang* lines *mo*.

"And, would you believe, sometimes we get our scripts on the taping day itself? *Mainit-init pa galing sa* xerox machine! So it's really amazing that some actors have been doing it for a long time already. *Siguro ako, pang* temporary *lang—di ko kaya ng pangmatagalan*," she laughs.

Spiels

Memorizing lines is the least of Belinda's problems "Sa MTV *kasi*, I'm used to memorizing spiels, so *madali lang*. What I really wanted *sana* is to have more time to sit down and talk with the director," she sighs.

Belinda recalled a time when she had to do a really tough scene. "This was when I was asked to cry and I was all by myself, *wala akong ka-eksena*. So I was really worried about how to do it *na* one *take lang*.

"Luckily, the director sat down with me and asked about a very sensitive topic *sa buhay ko*. I didn't know how she learned *na wala dito ang* family *ko* except for my dad. *Yun na, napaiyak na ako. Pero hindi* take one *ang nangyari*."

Does she look forward to each taping day? Belinda was silent for a moment and then said, "*Oo naman*. I'm excited working with the professionals. Of course, I don't look forward to waking up early, staying up late and waiting around. But it's fun, and as I've said, it's a learning experience."

Critical

How does she react when she sees herself on television? "Terrible! *Nahihiya ako*. I ask myself, what am I doing there? *Ang pangit-pangit naman niyan!* No wonder people hate me. I'm very critical of myself. I feel I could have done better with the proper guidance and with more preparation. This is why I really admire people who could pull it off and make it look good on TV," she explains.

Belinda is slowly but surely gaining the public's notice through the role that she essays in the TV drama. Before, viewers easily identified her as a VJ, but more people now address her by her character's name in the TV drama.

"And the funny thing is, people react exactly as Armida told me on my first taping day; that Judy Ann's fans are going to hate me no matter what I do *dahil inaapi ko siya*. And I realized it's true. Most of them do hate me!" she sighs.

Of misguided . . .

(From page G4)

couldn't even stick to the topic at hand, so how can we expect them to be logical?

Predominance

So, before we lost *our* sanity, we decided to check out what programs were running on the other stations around the 9 p.m. time slot, and discovered that there was a predominance of two types: the religious program and the "medical" sort.

GMA's dzBB had Charles Stanley's "In Touch," which discussed "spiritual blindness." He said the "spiritually blind" were people who led very nonscriptural lives, and those who questioned the authenticity of the Gospel.

MBC's dzRH had John Marshland's "Bible Issues," syndicated straight from Tulsa, Oklahoma.

There were quite a number of religious shows on that time block, both in English and Filipino. And, listening to the hosts/preachers and how their audiences reacted to them, we realized how much solace religion and spirituality offer to people.

Disclaimers

The other format is the "medical" and "pseudo-medical" type. A lot of them have disclaimers—"if symptoms persist, see your doctor." But they are living broadcasting proof that, like the Filipino's penchant for "get rich quick" schemes, we, also, patronize a lot of "get healed quick" schemes.

We heard hosts mouth seemingly logical explanations about the power of Iridology that the Philippine Association of Ophthalmologists condemns. Have you seen the PAO ads in major broadsheets lately? Simply put, the message was clear, they didn't recognize iridology.

At around the same time, we heard a radio host from Angel Radyo's dzAR bid the listeners of his advice show goodbye. It was a poignant moment; the host tried to keep his composure on the air, as he repeatedly announced that he got a memo from the station that afternoon informing him that his show was going to air just until the end of the year.

He sounded calm and kept reassuring his listeners about their respective problems, some of them on the verge of hysteria over lost loves, while the soft-spoken host tried to keep his wits about him. But hey, they had more than two weeks to say goodbye, right?

When we tuned in again the following day to the same program, it was already called "Pasko sa dzAR" and featured non-stop traditional and pop Christmas songs, like Barry Manilow's "It's Just Another New Year's Eve" and Dolly Parton's shrill "White Christmas."

Maybe the host just didn't want to prolong the agony. At least, despite the loss, he ended his show with dignity.

Get ready for more polemics . . .

(From page G4)

The festival justified its decision in this wise: The two prizes (Actor and Actress) are awarded to three actors playing one character at different periods in his life. With a mixture of emotion and humor, the co-existence of masculinity and femininity in each human being is thus brilliantly illustrated.

We think it's a joke. Even Dolphy couldn't quite believe this "achievement," saying, "I never thought I'd win a Best Actress award." Enough said.

Zhang Ziyi's fabulous TVC

We love the new commercial of Visa credit card which features sensational Chinese actress Zhang Ziyi doing the same tricks that made her a big international star in the movie "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon."

We were so happy to learn that David Guerrero, our former creative head at Ogilvy & Mather, was part of the international team that created this winner.

Aside from Guerrero, the team included Australian director Bruce Hunt, who has been commissioned to do the Visa series to be rolled out until next year. Hong Kong martial arts expert Ridley Po Wah Tsui and American executive producer Gerry Gentemann.

Avoid the Twelve Pounds of Christmas

The Season for Bingeing is here!

And while the will to resist is there, the body is weak. And who can blame you?

The good news is that you can win the battle of the bulge and still have a happy Christmas. With *lipase inhibitors,* absorption of dietary fat is blocked, facilitating weight reduction and reducing the risks from fat- and obesity-associated diseases. You can even get additional benefits like improvement in blood pressure especially if you are hypertensive, better sugar control if you are diabetic and improved blood cholesterol or lipid levels.

With *lipase inhibitors*, you may experience oily discharge, which can be controlled. This is in fact a good sign that the *lipase inhibitor* works. It means that you are now losing 30% of your fat intake!

Consult your doctor for advice on how to combat obesity the healthy, safe and effective way.

Don't let the battle of the bulge ruin your Christmas celebration.

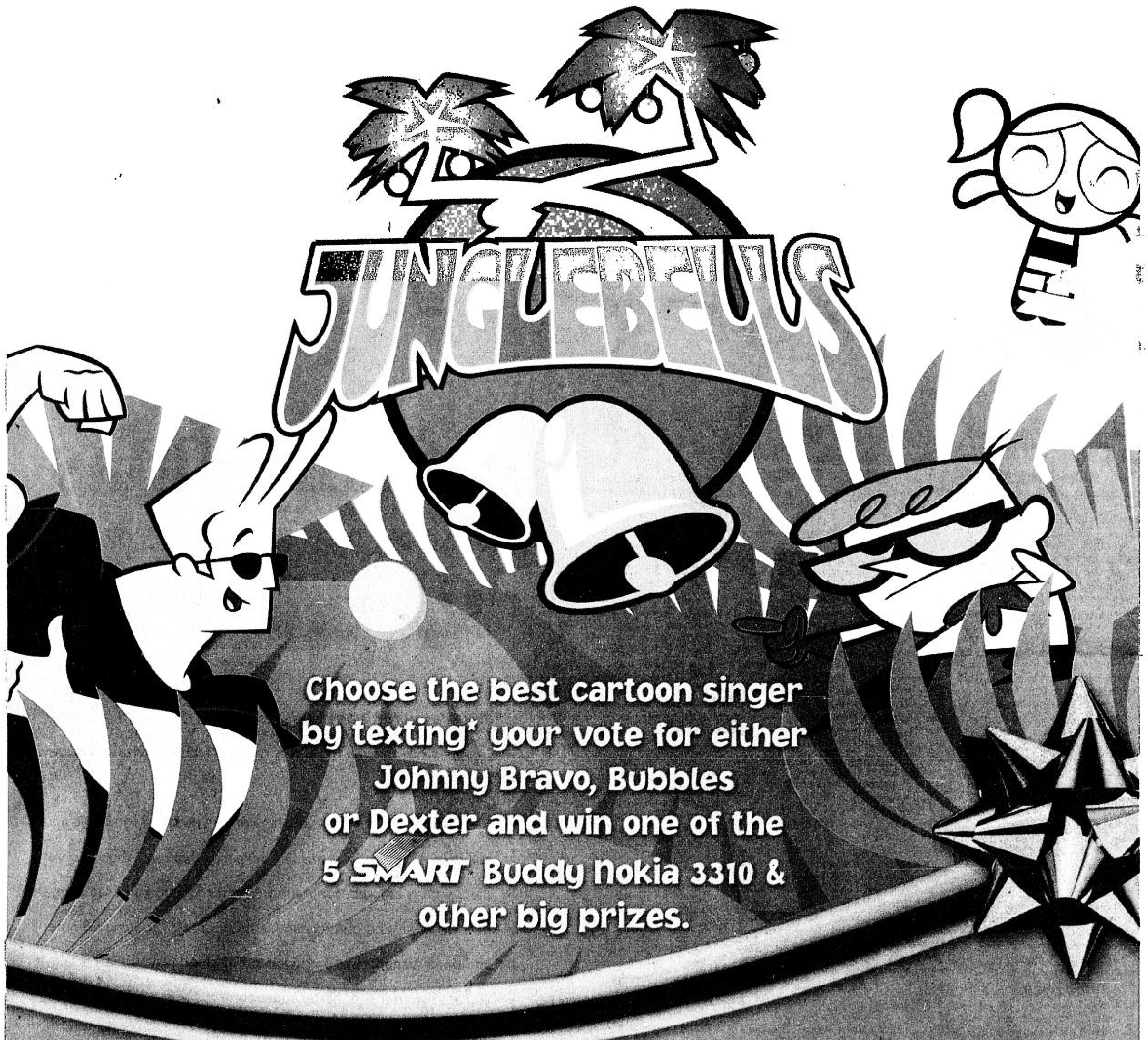
Obesity Fatline Numbers
Roche
899-5955 (Metro Manila)
1-800-1888-5955 (Provincial Areas)
(02)890-5012 (Fax)
e-mail: roche@bcdpinpoint.com
Roche (Philippines) Inc.
2252 Don Chino Roces Ave., Makati City

Fax us! ☑ *YES.* Please send me my free BMI calculator along with instructions on how I can accurately measure my Body Mass Index. Please send to the address below.
Name
Tel. No. (during the day) Mobile Phone No.
Address E-mail Address
Age Height Weight

a simply amazing christmas treat from SMART

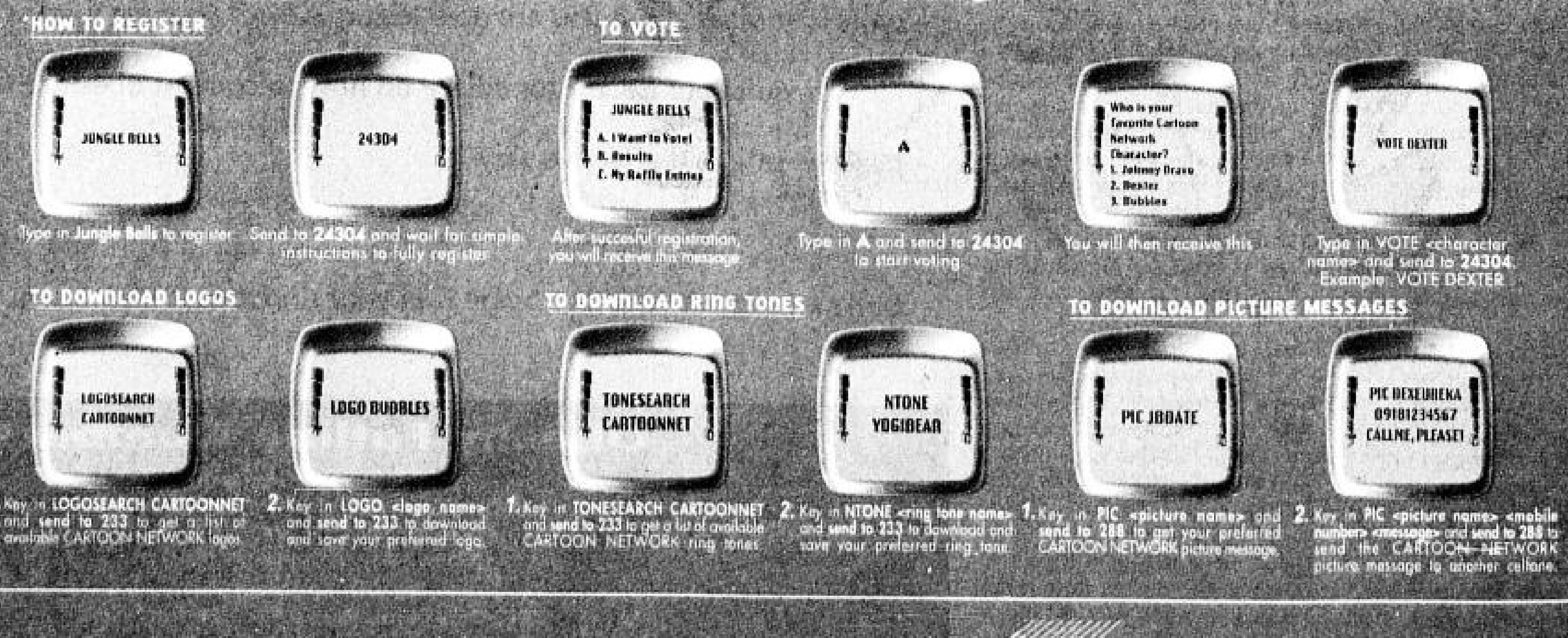
SMART and **CARTOON NETWORK**

bring you



Choose the best cartoon singer by texting* your vote for either Johnny Bravo, Bubbles or Dexter and win one of the 5 SMART Buddy Nokia 3310 & other big prizes.

SMART and Cartoon Network bring you Jungle Bells in the Jungle, the most fun raffle promo this Christmas! You can win one of the 5 SMART Buddy Nokia 3310 and other great prizes. It's so easy to join! Just tune in to Cartoon Network from November 30 - December 21, 2001 to hear Johnny Bravo, Bubbles and Dexter sing "Jingle Bells in the Jungle." Text us which of the three you think had the best performance. Do that, and you'll have one entry. The more entries, the more chances of winning. Join now! And let SMART and Cartoon Network put something under your tree this Christmas!



***HOW TO REGISTER**

JUNGLE BELLS

Type in **Jungle Bells** to register.

24304

Send to **24304** and wait for simple instructions to fully register.

TO VOTE

JUNGLE BELLS
A. I Want to Vote!
B. Results
C. My Raffle Entries

After succesful registration, you will receive this message.

A

Type in **A** and send to **24304** to start voting.

Who is your favorite Cartoon Network Character?
1. Johnny Bravo
2. Dexter
3. Bubbles

You will then receive this.

VOTE DEXTER

Type in VOTE <character name> and send to **24304**. Example: VOTE DEXTER

TO DOWNLOAD LOGOS

LOGOSEARCH CARTOONNET

1. Key in **LOGOSEARCH CARTOONNET** and **send to 233** to get a list of available CARTOON NETWORK logos.

LOGO BUBBLES

2. Key in **LOGO <logo name>** and **send to 233** to download and save your preferred logo.

TO DOWNLOAD RING TONES

TONESEARCH CARTOONNET

1. Key in **TONESEARCH CARTOONNET** and **send to 233** to get a list of available CARTOON NETWORK ring tones.

NTONE YOGIBEAR

2. Key in **NTONE <ring tone name>** and **send to 233** to download and save your preferred ring tone.

TO DOWNLOAD PICTURE MESSAGES

PIC JBDATE

1. Key in **PIC <picture name>** and **send to 288** to get your preferred CARTOON NETWORK picture message.

PIC DEXEUREKA
09181234567
CALLME, PLEASE!

2. Key in **PIC <picture name> <mobile number> <message>** and **send to 288** to send the CARTOON NETWORK picture message to another cellone.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

1. 1 vote = 1 virtual raffle point. SMART subscribers can vote for as many times as s/he wants, anytime of the day within the promo period.
2. Promo runs from November 30 - December 21, 2001.
3. All successful entries will be charged P 2.50 per message sent.
4. Prizes are as follows:
    a. 5 SMART Buddy Nokia 3310 celfone kits. (Exclusive to SMART Text Promo contestants only)
5. Other prizes (For Jungle Bells Text Promotion, E-mail and Mail contestants)
    a. 1 TOYTOWN toy showcase
    b. 200 Cartoon Network Powerpuff Girls / Dexter's Laboratory/ Johnny Bravo watches.
6. Grand draw will be on January 22, 2002.

Logos, Ring Tones, Picture Messages are supported by selected Nokia handsets.
SMART Cartoon Network rates: P 2.50 per inquiry • P 12.00 per download.

SMART
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Saturday SPECIAL

MONTANO in "Bagong Buwan."

MMFF entries are a generally promising lot

BY NESTOR U. TORRE

AFTER a few suspense-laden weeks, the screening committee of the 2001 Metro Manila film Festival has chosen the filmfest's seven official entries, which the public can view starting on Dec. 25. Will it be a sad or happy cinematic Christmas for Filipino film buffs? Mixed emotions:

Priorities

We're glad that all of our three "basic" choices, "Bagong Buwan," "Yamashita" and "Tatarin," made it as official entries. If even one of these movies had been sidelined, that would have been a major loss, and a sign that the filmfest's priorities were out of whack.

So, the fact that they're in the festival tells us that it values quality which, according to its original charter, should be its primary reason for being.

We're also happy that the "alternative" film, "Hesusmaryosep," made it to the festival, despite its lack of star power. The film about four young priests and their personal stories should be a breath of fresh air in the filmfest

More standard

More standard are the three other festival movies—"Bahay Ni Lola" is entertainingly spooky, "Hubog" is a sex drama, and "Hindi Kita Ma-Reach" is an action-comedy romp topbilling Judy Ann Santos and presidential son Mikey Arroyo.

This last movie is one for the books, the latest entry in our "only in the Philippines" ledger. This is the backstory: Aside from Mikey, another (*former*) presidential son, Jinggoy Estrada, *also* had a movie in the can with Judy Ann As his co-star.

Why is Judy Ann so popular with presidential sons who are also movie actors? Because Mikey and Jinggoy can't carry a movie on their own, so they feel they need the rapport of bankable stars like Judy Ann to keep them from embarrassing themselves at the box office.

Edgy

So, both Jinggoy and Mikey's movies were aiming for a slot in the festival, but only Mikey's made it. Naturally, this fuelled talk that it had an edge because he was the son of the *current* president.

That may or may not be the case, but this is the reason why presidential children should inhibit themselves from pursuing show biz careers—they will always be vulnerable to charges of (implicitly) throwing their weight around to get more favorable treatment.

Worse, not just the presidential children are vulnerable to such accusations, but also their presidential parents—who need aggravations like this like a hole in the head.

Anyway, Mikey's movie is in the festival and we'll have to view it to see if it really "deserves" such preferential treatment.

Inspiring movies

Back to the other entries: The filmfest "traditionally" has a horror entry like this year's "Bahay Ni Lola" because the festival organizers feel that the Christmas kiddie audience enjoys getting spooked out of its wits, but we don't agree. We feel that inspiring rather than scary movies should be shown at this time of year.

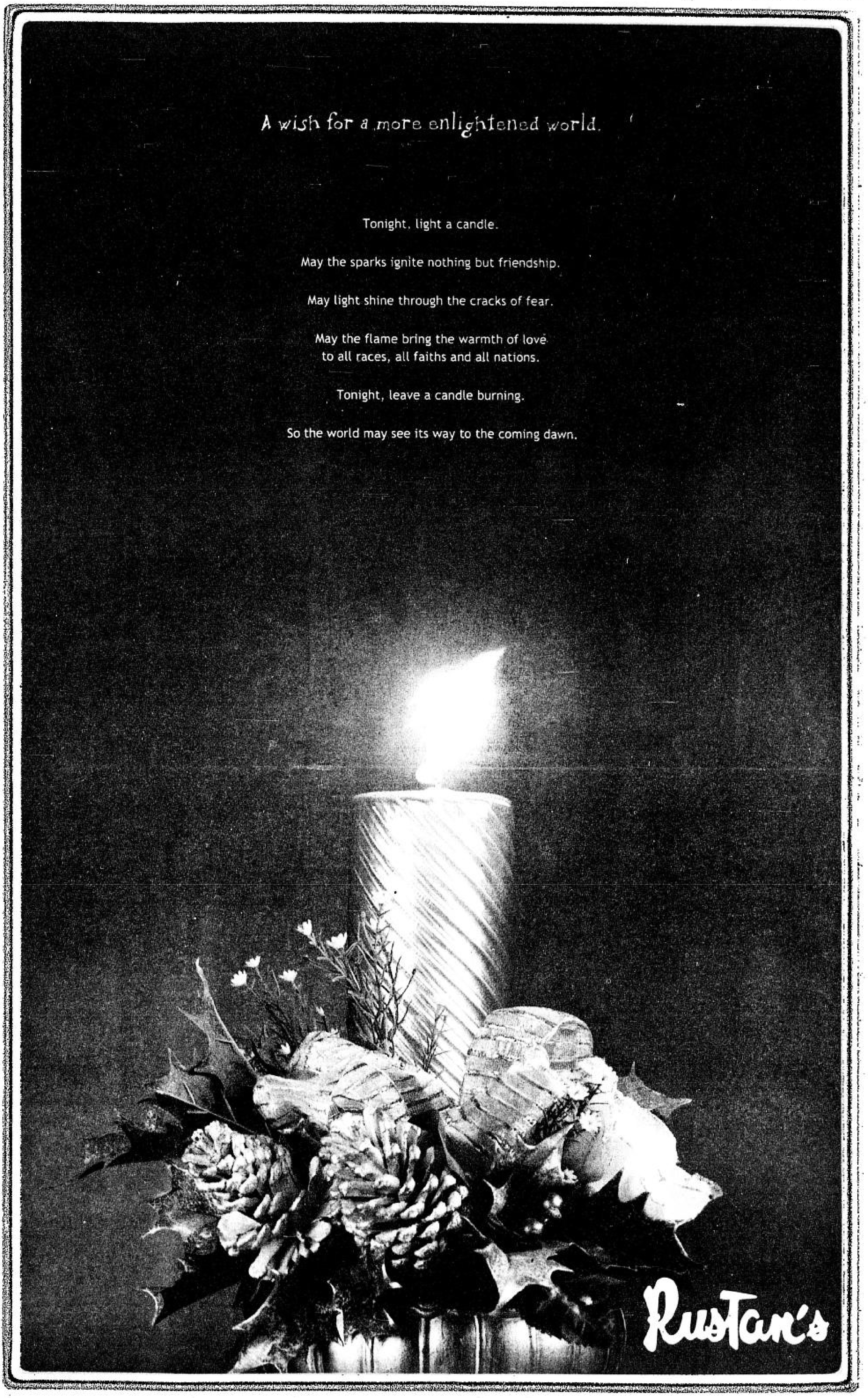
As for sex-dramas like "Hubog," they also look out-of-sorts in the yearend festival. We know that they're there for the "adult" audience, but they still feel too exploitative for the season.

So, our best bets are "Bagong Buwan," "Yamashita" and "Tatarin." "Bagong Buwan" is a should-see film for all Filipinos because it's the first movie to deal head-on with the controversial and combustible conflict in Mindanao.

Fabled treasure

"Yamashita" digs deeper into the facts and fiction surrounding the fabled treasure, World War Two in the Philippines, unbridled hope, deathless avarice, etc.—all enhanced by extraordinary production values and special effects.

And "Tatarin" vivifies Nick Joaquin's sensuous period story about life, love and lust, within the context of old Filipino values in conflict with primordial impulses. Let's hope that the "lust" factor doesn't overwhelm the material's other elements!



A wish for a more enlightened world.

Tonight, light a candle.

May the sparks ignite nothing but friendship.

May light shine through the cracks of fear.

May the flame bring the warmth of love
to all races, all faiths and all nations.

Tonight, leave a candle burning.

So the world may see its way to the coming dawn.

Rustan's

A member of citigroup

Look sharp, shop smart.

Allen Edmonds Shoes • Ascot Chang • Bergamo • Boss Hugo Boss • Cerruti 1881 • Cerruti Jeans • Claiborne Men • Clarks of England • Country Classics • Dr. Marten's • G2000 • Kickers • Linea Italia 6750 • Liz Claiborne • Mix • Nike Park • Nike Stadium • Replay Jeans • Ritratto • Rockport • Tango • The Black Shop • The Merger • TieLine • Urban & Co.

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Get your
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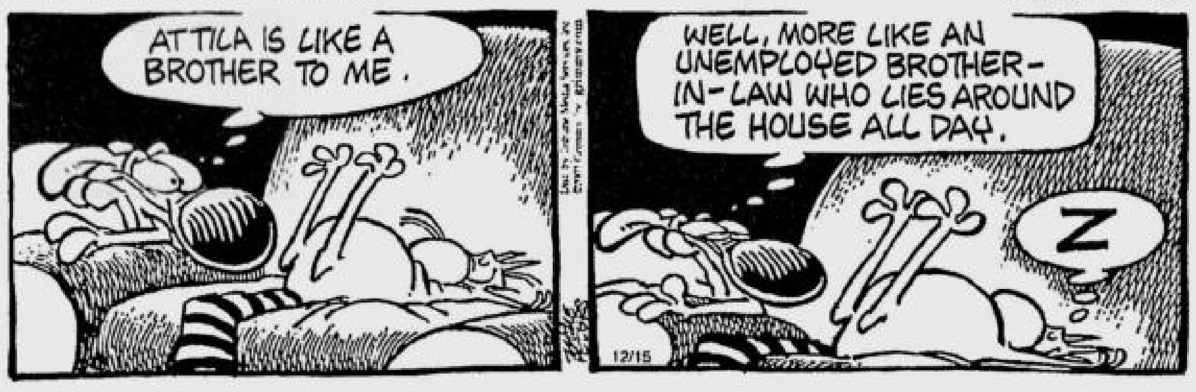
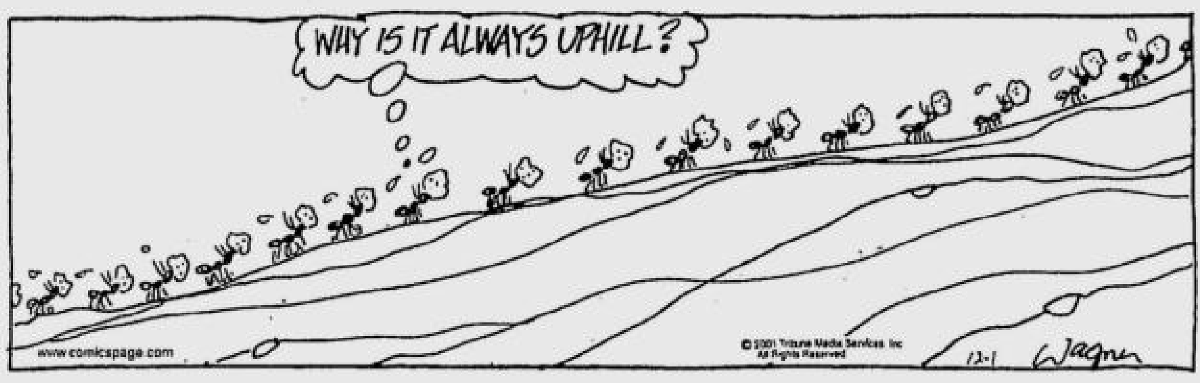
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


ATTILA IS LIKE A BROTHER TO ME.
WELL, MORE LIKE AN UNEMPLOYED BROTHER-IN-LAW WHO LIES AROUND THE HOUSE ALL DAY.
Z
12/15

ANIMAL CRACKER

BY FRED WAGNER


WHY IS IT ALWAYS UPHILL?
www.comicspage.com
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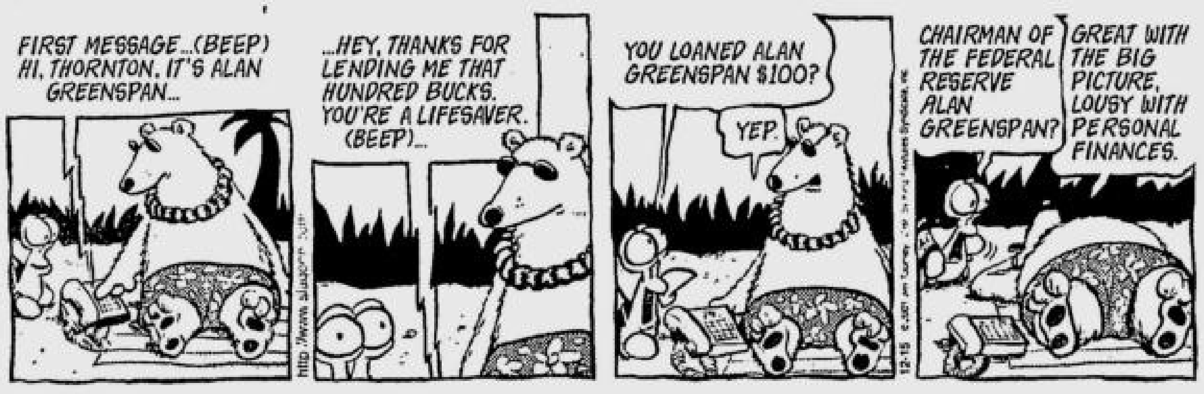
12-1
Wagner

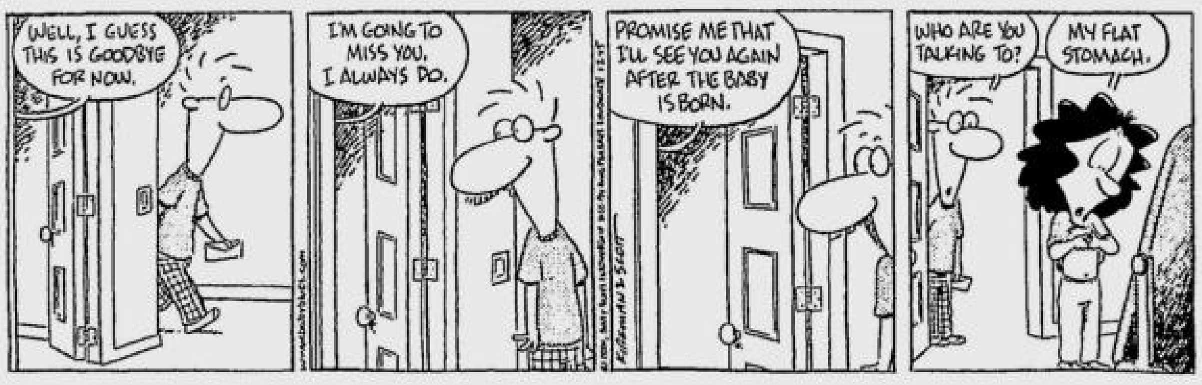
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


FIRST MESSAGE...(BEEP) HI, THORNTON. IT'S ALAN GREENSPAN...
...HEY, THANKS FOR LENDING ME THAT HUNDRED BUCKS. YOU'RE A LIFESAVER. (BEEP)...
YOU LOANED ALAN GREENSPAN $100?
YEP.
CHAIRMAN OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE ALAN GREENSPAN?
GREAT WITH THE BIG PICTURE, LOUSY WITH PERSONAL FINANCES.
12-15

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WELL, I GUESS THIS IS GOODBYE FOR NOW.
I'M GOING TO MISS YOU. I ALWAYS DO.
PROMISE ME THAT I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN AFTER THE BABY IS BORN.
WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?
MY FLAT STOMACH.

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Tim Conway, Helen Slater, Don Johnson, Heidi Bohay, Nick Beggs, Dave Clark

Happy Birthday: Your ambition will not be hard to detect this year. Don't give your intentions away with your overly zealous attitude. You should be very exact in your pursuits and refuse to let anyone or anything sidetrack you. Man's own will determines his destiny, so take the world by storm and show everyone just how capable you can be. The time to make your mark is now so stop hesitating and start doing what you do best. Your numbers are 7, 18, 27, 35, 41, 46

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Keep an open mind today. Don't misinterpret someone's interest in you. You will be disappointed if he or she just wants to find out information.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You may have a problem when talking to someone who has information you want. Try not to let anyone mislead you. Question anything that doesn't appear to be accurate. You should probably do your own research or at least get a second opinion.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Getting involved in a joint venture will only lead to loss. Dead-end projects are apparent if you begin them today. You can look at contracts, but don't sign them unless you have had your legal adviser go ahead.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Someone is trying to fool you. Take a look at your present relationship and be honest about what it is and isn't doing for you. You can make changes by confronting any problems head on.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Don't count on getting a lot of help from others today. Rely on your own know-how and proceed with confidence. Talk to the ones you love and trust about your dilemmas at work.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Take it easy especially if you are attending a work-related party. Over-indulgence is apparent and it won't help your future prospects. You may find that you attract individuals who are escapists .

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Back up and decide what's important to you. Problems at home will cause disruptions in your everyday routine. You may have to spend a little bit more time with loved ones.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You will be emotionally stressed if you have been going through problems at work. Talk to a good friend about your situation. The New Year is fast approaching and you need some positive reassurance .

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Don't be so generous with your cash. You will lose a friend if you lend him,or her money. This person may be taking advantage of your gook nature. Keep your financial situation to yourself.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Be prepared to deal with issues that could change your future. You need to get out and expand your circle of friends. New interests will get you back in the swing of things.

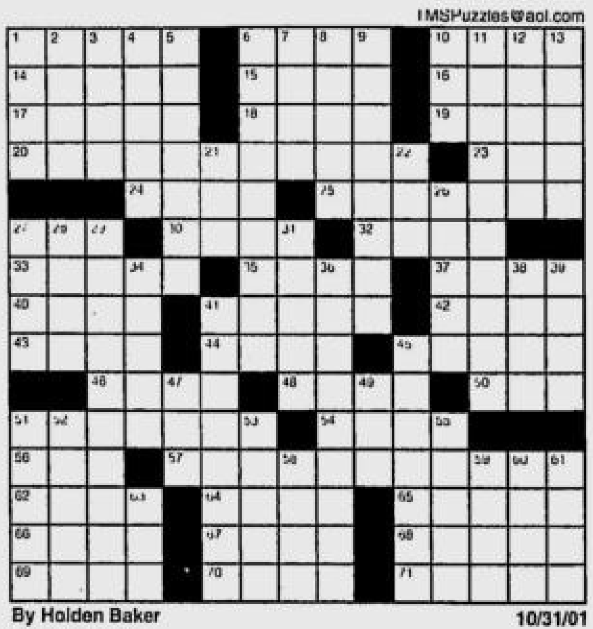
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): This may be the season to party but you must not drink and drive. Problems with authority figures will detain you. Abide by the rules of the road if you have to go out. Don't take unnecessary chances.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): New relationships will develop if you get out and attend events. A sudden attraction may not be lasting but it will be fun. Build a friendship first if you want it to last.

Birthday Baby: You are steadfast, stable and raring to go. You have the drive to get where you want to go and the power to make others listen. You have what it takes to be a leader, dominant in whatever field you choose.

DAILY CROSSWORD

IMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Holden Baker
Greenfield, MA

10/31/01

ACROSS

1 Buoyant airship
6 Unwanted lip
10 Basilica area
14 Rarin' to go
15 Green Gables girl
16 Without vitality
17 Wear away
18 Booty
19 Close-fitting
20 Candle material
23 Devoured
24 Hilo garlands
25 Suppresses
27 Small snake
30 First name in country music
32 Mob violence
33 Sugar-and-spice creations
35 Radius' comrade-in-arms?
37 Ancient harp
40 Sal's canal
41 Dangle limply
42 Nile wader
43 Offshoot group
44 One watching
45 Hired muscle
46 Billions and billions of years
48 Greek portico
50 Classic Jaguar letters
51 More lustrous
54 Shh!
56 Peter's last name?
57 Real estate levy
62 Auto pioneer
64 Salad fish?
65 Alter a skirt's length
66 Designer Cassini
67 Sponsorship
68 Accustom
69 Barber's call
70 Jonathan Larsen play
71 Leslie of "Gigi"

DOWN

1 Pager sound
2 Zhivago's love
3 Frankenstein's assistant
4 Victoria Cross, for instance
5 Likes better
6 Stonehenge location
7 Pretty soon
8 Phoebe and Hank
9 Prepare the snare
10 Commercial pieces
11 Hockey's "sin bin"
12 Pan-fry
13 Perimeters
21 For shame!
22 Noon on a sundial
26 Page number
27 Gets older
28 Male parent
29 Commodities figure
31 Bitter laxative drug
34 Reveal
36 New England and New York
38 Hockey site
39 Being: Lat.
41 Military runaway
45 Of the stomach
47 Puppy's bite
49 "__ Town"
51 Pitch woo
52 Actress Berry
53 Cosmetic item
55 Serengeti predator
58 Nabokov novel
59 Weekday abbr.
60 Space starter?
61 Superhero movie
63 Friday's rank: abbr.

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

S	C	A	M	P		M	O	S	S		W	A	T	T
P	A	N	E	L		E	M	I	T		H	E	R	E
A	R	T	I	E		R	I	L	E		I	R	A	N
S	P	I	N	D	O	C	T	O	R		R	I	C	O
				G	U	Y	S		E	I	L	E	E	N
L	E	T	T	E	R			D	O	R	Y			
O	A	H	U		S	O	F	A		O	B	E	S	E
S	C	A	R	F		H	A	M		N	I	C	E	R
S	H	I	N	E		I	T	E	M		R	H	E	A
			T	A	C	O			A	D	D	O	N	S
S	A	H	A	R	A		C	A	G	E				
A	R	A	B		R	O	L	L	I	N	G	P	I	N
T	I	L	L		H	A	U	L		I	R	E	N	E
I	S	L	E		O	R	E	O		M	I	S	T	S
N	E	S	S		P	S	S	T		S	N	O	O	T

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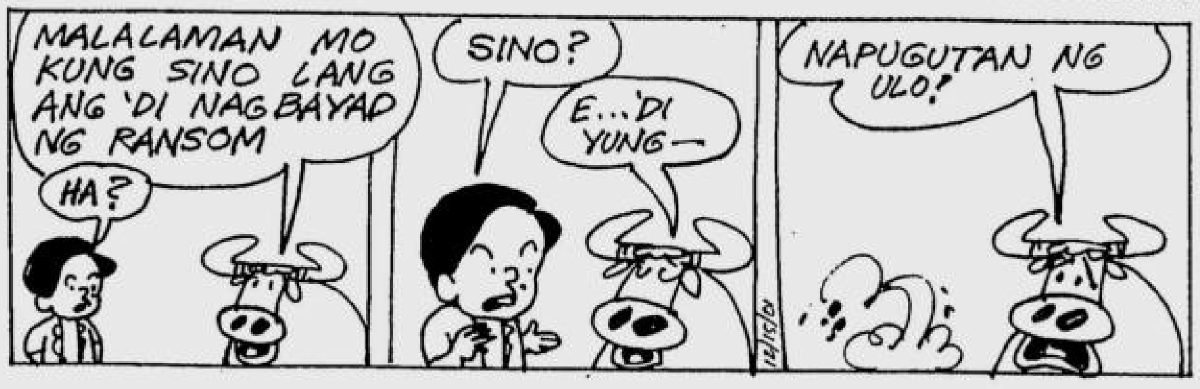
10/31/01

ANSWER ON MONDAY

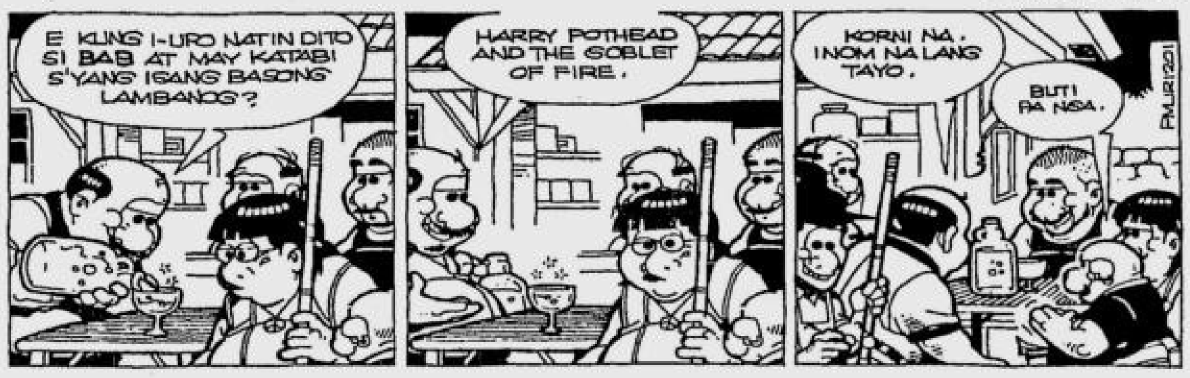
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MALALAMAN MO KUNG SINO LANG ANG 'DI NAGBAYAD NG RANSOM
HA?
SINO?
E...'DI YUNG—
NAPUGUTAN NG ULO!

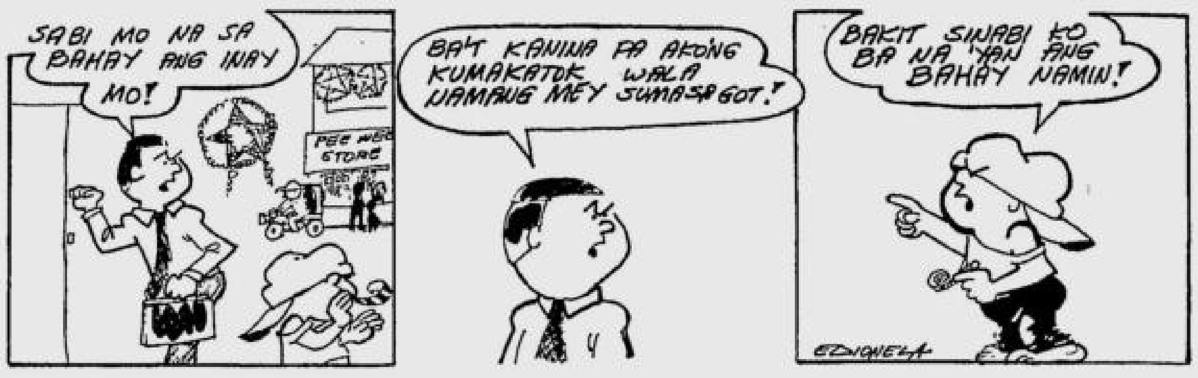
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


E KUNG I-URO NATIN DITO SI BAB AT MAY KATABI S'YANG ISANG BASONG LAMBANOG?
HARRY POTHEAD AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE.
KORNI NA. INOM NA LANG TAYO.
BUTI PA NGA.
PMJR1201

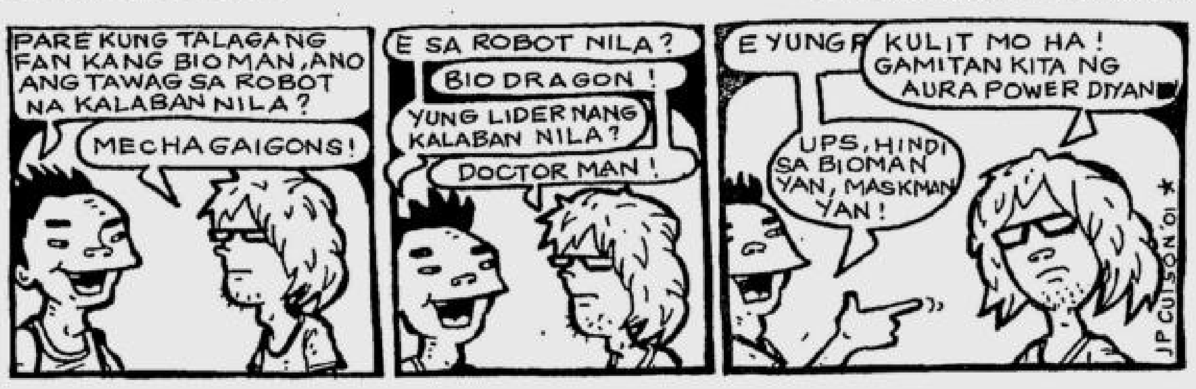
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


SABI MO NA SA BAHAY ANG INAY MO!
PEE WEE STORE
BA'T KANINA PA AKONG KUMAKATOK WALA NAMANG MEY SUMASAGOT.!
BAKIT SINABI KO BA NA 'YAN ANG BAHAY NAMIN!
EDIONELA

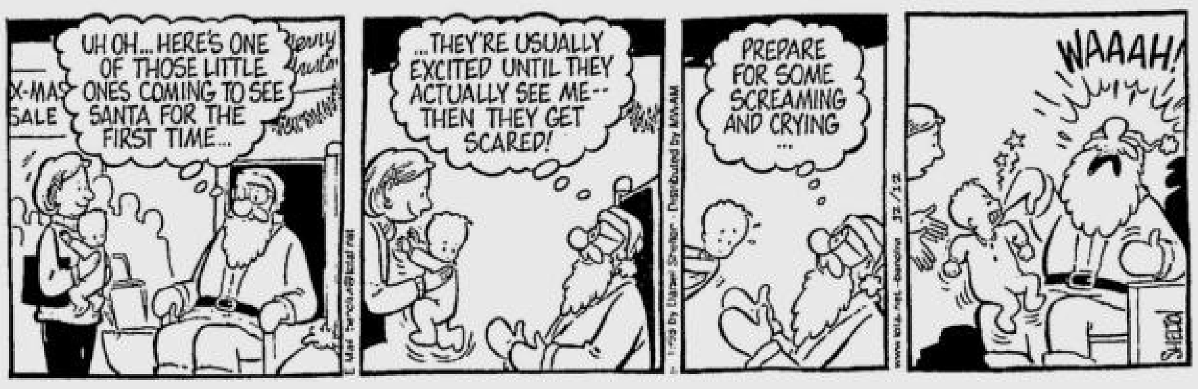
GARAPATA BLOOD

BY JOHN PAUL/BENG/MANIX


PARE KUNG TALAGANG FAN KANG BIOMAN, ANO ANG TAWAG SA ROBOT NA KALABAN NILA?
MECHAGAIGONS!
E SA ROBOT NILA?
BIO DRAGON!
YUNG LIDER NANG KALABAN NILA?
DOCTOR MAN!
E YUNGR
KULIT MO HA! GAMITAN KITA NG AURA POWER DIYAN!
UPS, HINDI SA BIOMAN YAN, MASKMAN YAN!
JP CUISON '01

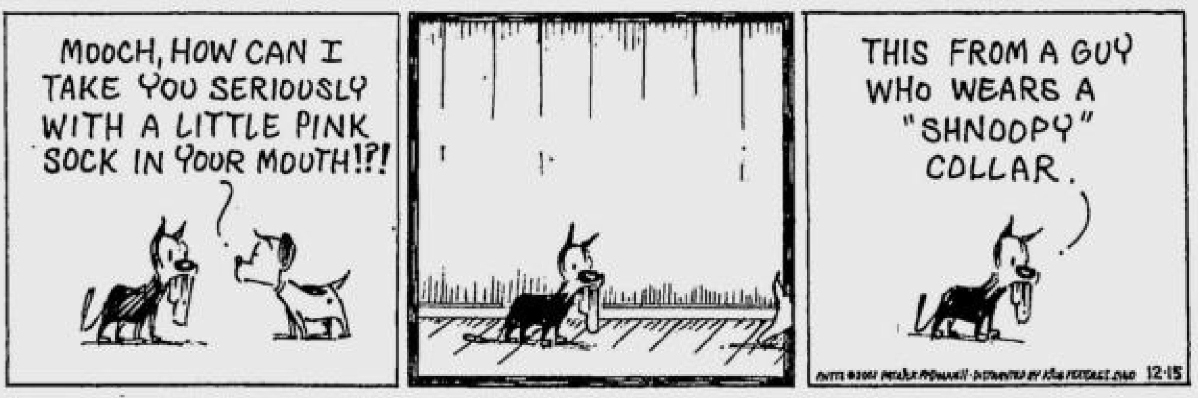
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


X-MAS SALE
UH OH... HERE'S ONE OF THOSE LITTLE ONES COMING TO SEE SANTA FOR THE FIRST TIME...
...THEY'RE USUALLY EXCITED UNTIL THEY ACTUALLY SEE ME-- THEN THEY GET SCARED!
PREPARE FOR SOME SCREAMING AND CRYING ...
WAAAH!
SHELTON

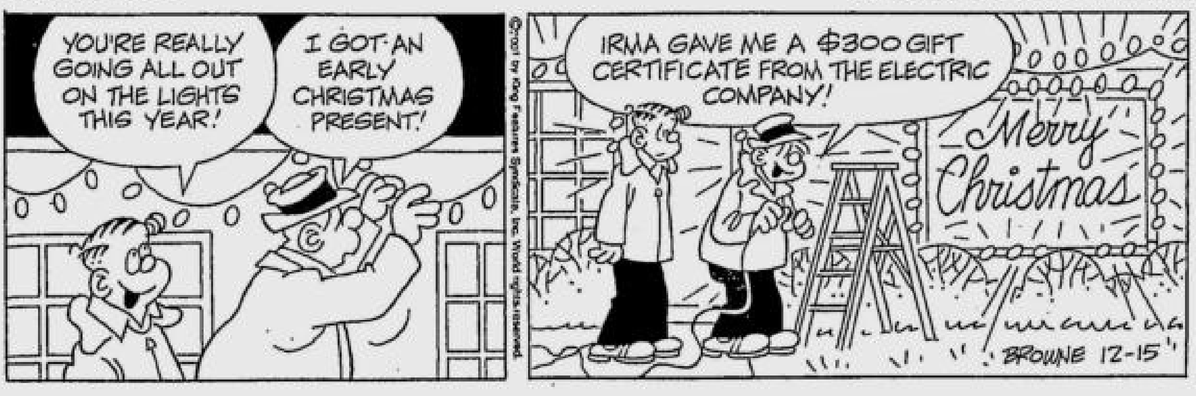
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MOOCH, HOW CAN I TAKE YOU SERIOUSLY WITH A LITTLE PINK SOCK IN YOUR MOUTH!?!
?
THIS FROM A GUY WHO WEARS A "SHNOOPY" COLLAR.
12-15

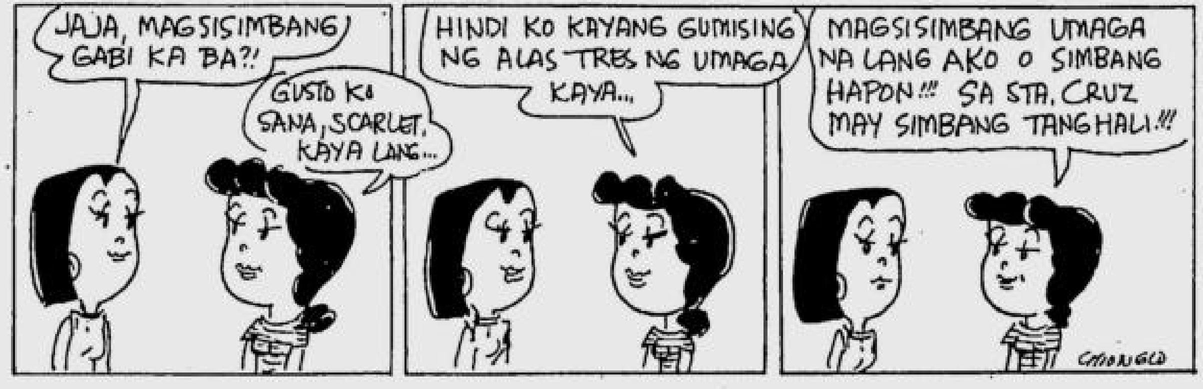
HI AND LOIS

BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


YOU'RE REALLY GOING ALL OUT ON THE LIGHTS THIS YEAR!
I GOT AN EARLY CHRISTMAS PRESENT!
IRMA GAVE ME A $300 GIFT CERTIFICATE FROM THE ELECTRIC COMPANY!
Merry Christmas
BROWNE 12-15

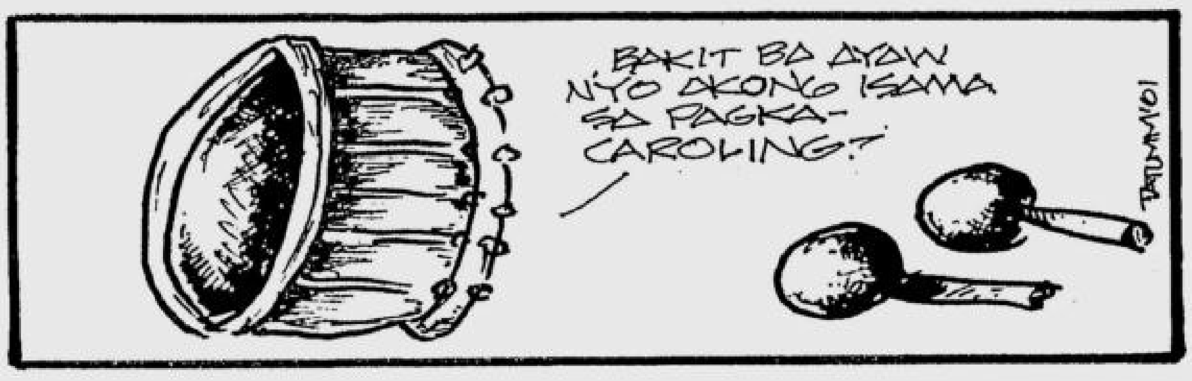
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JAJA, MAGSISIMBANG GABI KA BA?!
GUSTO KO SANA, SCARLET, KAYA LANG...
HINDI KO KAYANG GUMISING NG ALAS TRES NG UMAGA KAYA...
MAGSISIMBANG UMAGA NA LANG AKO O SIMBANG HAPON!!! SA STA. CRUZ MAY SIMBANG TANGHALI!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


BAKIT BA AYAW NIYO AKONG ISAMA SA PAGKA-CAROLING?
TATUM '01

Joey premieres 'Summer Catch' and 'The Lord of the Rings'

JOEY @ 92.3 FM fills your December nights with movies and music to set you in the right holiday mood.

Last Dec. 10, Joey premiered the teen romance flick, "Summer Catch," at Cinema 6 of Glorietta IV at 7:30 p.m. The movie stars Freddie Prinze Jr. and Jessica Biel in a poor-boy-meets-rich-girl tale with exciting baseball matches in between.

Movie magic

The movie magic continues with Joey's premiere of one of the most highly anticipated film adaptations of the decade, "The Lord of the Rings" at the Cinema 6 of Glorietta IV on Dec. 20 (Thursday). The movie features powerful performances from Elijah Wood (as Frodo Baggins), Sean Astin, Sir Ian McKellen, Viggo Mortensen, Liv Tyler, and Cate Blanchett.

Prepare to enter J.R. Tolkien's world of wizards and hobbits as Joey helps recreate the world of middle-earth during the premiere. Joey's December nights are likewise filled with great music. "Joey's Night Rhythms" took Toy Symphony to Streetlife last Dec. 4 and 11 for some pre-Christmas cheer.

Joey's café tour is back for "Bean Me Up, Joey" at Rockwell (Dec. 14), bringing the soothing rhythms of Christmas courtesy of the Acoustic Duo of Nobel Queano and Rodel Vidal and percussionist Louie Boogie.

Also on Dec. 14 (Friday), Joey joined Ayala Center's 12 Days of Christmas for the benefit of the GMA Foundation with "Winter Wonderland." There were heartwarming performances by Bituin Escalante, Calvin Millado, Acoustic Jive and the cast of "Rent." The promotion gave away a holiday for two to Vienna, Austria or Minneapolis, Minnesota.

FREDDIE Prinze, star of "Summer Catch."

Company Call revives 'Sa North Diversion Road'

TONY Perez's "Sa North Diversion Road" goes onstage at the CCP Tanghalang Huseng Batute (or CCP Experimental or Studio Theater) today at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Dec. 16 at 10:30 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Mounted by Company Call—a company of thespians committed to present actor-driven productions and whose aim is to convey fresh insights on human experience—Tony Perez's play which won third place in the 1985 CCP Playwriting Contest is a dramatic portrayal of marital infidelity and its consequences set in a lone bantam car endlessly traversing the North Expressway.

Vignettes

The multiple personas of man and woman unfold in a series of vignettes to create a psychosocial tapestry woven with the timeless themes of love, life and death.

"Sa North Diversion Road" features outstanding performances by John Arcilla (as Lalaki) and Flor Sacbibit (as Babae).

Dennis Marasigan directs. Call 896-4601.

JOHN Arcilla plays Lalaki.

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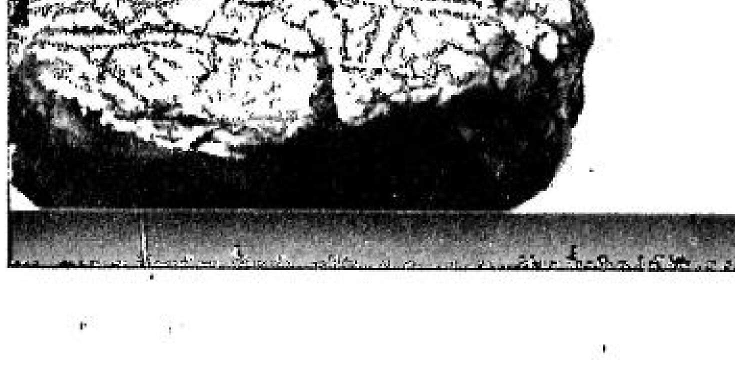

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'RIDING IN CARS WITH BOYS'

A strong woman's triumphant story

A TEENAGE girl circa 1965 shocks her family by getting pregnant by her loser boyfriend, agrees to marry for the sake of the baby and then spends years struggling to support her son while also trying to make something of her life.

Bumpy ride

You're in for a bumpy ride when Drew Barrymore ("Charlie's Angels") teams with director Penny Marshall ("A League of Their Own") in Columbia Pictures' critically acclaimed new comedic drama "Riding in Cars With Boys." The hit film, based on the life of writer Beverly Donofrio, features a stellar cast including Steve Zahn ("Joy Ride"), James Woods ("The General's Daughter"), Brittany Murphy ("Don't Say a Word") and Adam Garcia ("Coyote Ugly").

"Riding in Cars with Boys" begins in the 1960s when 15-year-old Bev (Barrymore) aspires to more than life as a typical homemaker. But the book-smart Bev is not that bright about boys, and she gets involved with Ray (Zahn), a high-school dropout without many plans. When Bev gets pregnant, she reluctantly agrees to marry Ray and drop out of school. Finding herself hitched and home with a small son, Jason, it seems that Bev's hopes of a college degree and writing career are destroyed . . .

Resilience

But life has a way of throwing unexpected curveballs, and when Ray drops out of the picture, Bev learns that she has the resilience to not only raise a child on her own, but follow her own dreams at the same time. Follow along as Bev goes on the journey of her lifetime!

Director Penny Marshall didn't have to do much research to capture Bev's world; the director herself also married and had a child by the age of 18. "Part of the story is so very similar to my own life," says Marshall. "This movie is about a girl who makes a mistake, but she keeps on striving and won't let go of her dream. She's a survivor."

For star Barrymore, who had to play Bev from ages 15 to 35, the film represents some of the hardest character work she's done to date. "You don't meet a lot of characters like Bev," the star concludes. "People doubted her but it inspired her to work harder . . . It's an amaz-

DREW B

Controversial talk show on Studio 23

SHE covers change-your-life issues like "Oprah" but is her own person nevertheless. She's Jenny Jones, fearless, frank and female host of her self-titled Studio 23 talk show on weekdays at 12 noon and every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evening at 11:30 p.m.

Self-improvement

Since her US talk show debut in September 1991, Jones has tackled a series of topics dealing with various areas of self-improvement ("You're Expecting A Child So Please Quit Acting Wild;" "Hey Wake Up & Lose Some Of That Make-up!" "Make-over My Frumpy Mom To Look Like The Bomb!") and human relationships ("Jenny, Seal My Fate & Find Me A Date!" "Stop Being So Mean To My Overweight Teen;" "How Could You Look Into My Eyes & Tell Me Those Lies?").

Sensational as her subjects sound, however, Jones aims to present the personal side to every story—a goal which often leads to provocative and hilarious results. In any case, Studio 23's latest talk show should be juicy food for thought for today's thinking audience.

Jones' climb up the talk show ladder is as eventful and inspiring as any of her offbeat episodes. Originally a drummer who toured the US and Canada with her rock band, Jones discovered her talent for making people laugh when viewers insisted she extend her comedic routine in between musical numbers.

Game show contestant

Switching to comedy full-time, she did the rounds in comedy clubs while supporting herself as a game show contestant, and even became the first woman to win the Star Search Comedy Grand Prize in 1986.

But it was "Girls Night Out," a successful comedy act which Jones created during her club tour with Engelbert Humperdinck, that really got her noticed. After a high-profile appearance on 20/20, Jones was offered the chance to host her own talk show, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Today, in addition to hosting her popular program, Jones is also best known for her numerous breast cancer efforts, as well as her scholarship programs for disadvantaged students. A high school drop-out at 16, the famous TV talk show host proved that anyone can overcome limitations when she took her high school equivalency exam—and aced it—in 1996. Now that's a woman worth watching!

At 'Boom Na Boom,' safety comes first

HE gets first crack at theme park rides in California USA like Disneyland and Knotsberry Farm. Three years ago, he added the rides of the Philippines' "Boom na Boom" Carnival to his prestigious list. Safety engineer Phillip Lindquist inspects and tries out all the park rides before allowing the general public to enjoy what the amusement center has to offer.

Tough job

"It's a tough job but somebody's got to do it," says Lindquist who has been in the safety industry for more than two decades now.

Lindquist works for the State of California's Department of Industrial Relations, Industrial Safety and Health Division.

He is the senior safety inspector in California and inspects amusement rides for the government so they comply with standards to make them safe for patrons. He has been to several states in the US working as a consultant, doing inspections, and going to amusement ride seminars.

Lindquist came to Manila to be a safety consultant for "Boom na Boom" Carnival in 1998. Since then, he visits "Boom na Boom "every year and surveys all the rides including the famous Vortex, Gravitron, Boomerang, and Cable Car to make sure they are in top shape.

His "seal of safety" is given to "Boom na Boom" for its 2001 holiday season which will run until Jan. 6, 2002 at the CCP Complex, Roxas blvd.

Experience

Through the seminars he has attended and his experience as a safety engineer, Lindquist was able to develop a comprehensive checklist of what a ride must have.

According to him, a safe ride is one that has been manufactured by a good, well-known company that is reputed to meet all the standards. It should also meet all calculations to make sure that the steel is strong enough for the speed of the ride.

Apart from guaranteeing the safety of the rides, Lindquist also trains "Boom na Boom" workers on ride safety, and getting people into and out of the rides.

"Safety, above all, is the primary concern of 'Boom na Boom.' We want rides which are not only fun and exciting but are safe for kids and adults as well," says Haydee Kwan, vice president of Philippine Exhibits and Themeparks Corp. (Petco), "Boom na Boom" organizer.

Lindquist notes that the carnivals and amusement centers in the Philippines have gone a long way since he first worked in the country as safety consultant.

"Thanks to technology, local carnival rides are now more sophisticated, exciting and thrilling," he assesses.

In the case of "Boom na Boom," the carnival has acquired imported rides from the US, Italy and Japan. Some of these rides are the Boomerang Roller Coaster, Cable Car, Flying Carpet, Gravitron and Vortex.

While the roller coaster is still the biggest attraction both here and abroad, everybody is still into family rides which Mom, Dad and kids can enjoy together. But according to Lindquist, trends in carnival rides have gone from the traditional merry-go-round-type and big roller coasters to the interactive type where carnival goers do more than just sit down and ride.

"In the US, they have the so-called Spider Man, where you get into a little tunnel filled with neon lights and, with laser guns, you shoot at the target and score," Lindquist shares.

New Thai cinema in Cinemanila 2001

AUDIENCES of the 3rd Annual Cinemanila International Film Festival will have a taste of exciting Thai cinema as Thailand takes centerstage as one of the countries in focus for this year's filmfest.

Adaptation

"Jan Dara"—Nonzee Nimibutr's adaptation of the most famous erotic novel in Thai literature—leads the heavyweight pack of Thai films in exhibition. The film translates to the big screen the story of unbridled lust in a household in 1930s Bangkok. Its executive producer is Peter Chan who directed for DreamWorks the romantic comedy "The Love Letter" topbilled by Kate Capshaw in 1999. Nimibutr has been tapped to do a Hollywood picture for DreamWorks by Steven Spielberg.

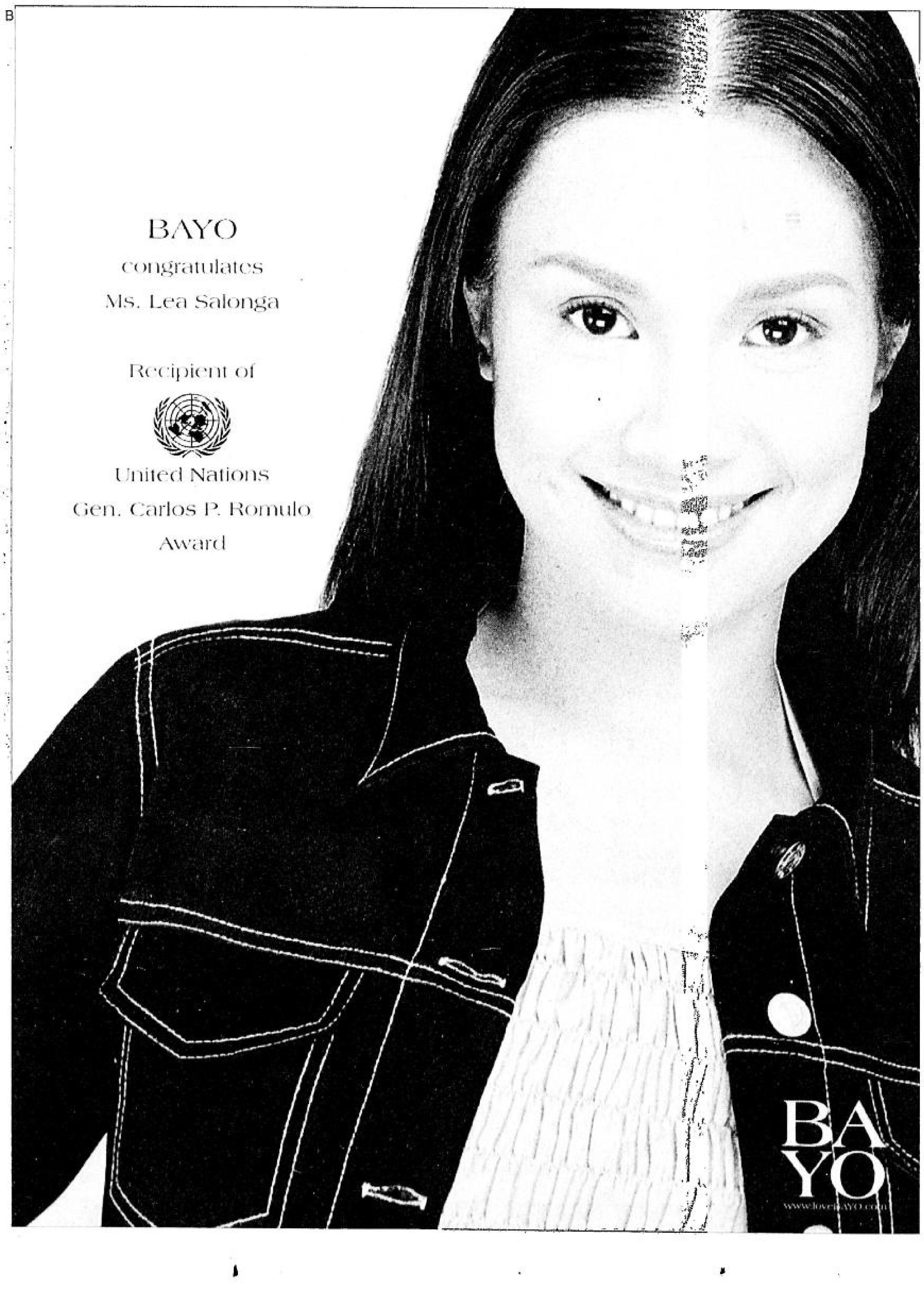
"Jan Dara" is Nimibutr's latest film since his 1999's "Nang Nak" became the biggest Thai movie hit ever. Both "Nang Nak"—Nimibutr's retelling of a Thai romantic legend—and "Dang Birely and the Young Gangsters"—his acclaimed 1997 debut—will also be exhibited.

In addition to the triptych of Nimibutr's films, "Tears of the Black Tiger" by Wisit Sartsanatieng is believed to have all the makings of a classic cult movie with its central love story bringing out the spirit of Thai romance.

Directorial debut

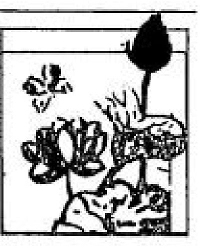
"Tears of the Black Tiger" is Sartsanatieng's directorial break after doing the screenplay for "Nang Nak." Its producer is Nimibutr. Another Nimibutr production to be screened is "Bangkok Dangerous." It is the directorial debut of twins Oxide and Danny Pang, who come up with a raw, bloody and exhilarating thriller about love and death.

Cinemanila 2001 is being presented by the City of Makati until Dec. 16, 2001 at the Greenbelt and Glorietta Cinemas at Ayala Center.



Avoid those sweets!

LOTUS POND



R. Valencia

WHAT does sugar do to your body? The following facts compiled by Nancy Appleton should be considered before reaching out for those sugar-laden goodies and desserts. This is the latest expose on that masked danger which is posing as a sweet treat:

Negative effects

"Lick the Sugar Habit" (a book by Appleton) warns of the negative and often dangerous effects of sugar on the body. In addition to throwing off the body's homeostasis, excess sugar may result in a number of other negative effects. Using documentation from a variety of medical journals and other scientific publications, Appleton has summed up the consequences of a body out of homeostasis due to eating excess sugar. You might make a copy of this list and put it on your refrigerator door or tape it to the door of the pantry where you keep your sugar bowl:

"Sugar can suppress the immune system.

"Sugar can upset the body's mineral balance.

"Sugar can cause hyperactivity, anxiety, concentration difficulties, and crankiness in children.

"Sugar can adversely affect children's school grades.

"Sugar can produce a significant rise in triglycerides.

"Sugar contributes to a weakened defense against bacterial infection.

"Sugar can cause kidney damage.

"Sugar can reduce helpful high density lipoproteins (HDLs).

"Sugar can promote an elevation of harmful low density lipoproteins (LDLs).

Chromium deficiency

"Sugar may lead to chromium deficiency. Cause copper deficiency. Interferes with absorption of calcium and magnesium. Cause colon cancer, with an increased risk in women. Be a risk factor in gall bladder cancer. Increase fasting levels of glucose. Weaken eyesight. Raise the level of a neurotransmitter called serotonin, which can narrow blood vessels. Cause hypoglycemia. Produce an acidic stomach. Raise adrenaline levels in children.

"Sugar malabsorption is common in those with functional bowel disease.

Aging process

"Sugar can speed up the aging process, causing wrinkles and grey hair; promote tooth decay; contribute to weight gain and obesity; cause asthma; cause candidiasis (yeast infection); contribute to osteoporosis; contribute to saliva acidity; lead to decreased glucose tolerance; increase systolic blood pressure.

"Sugar causes food allergies; contributes to diabetes; causes cataracts; lowers enzymes' ability to function; increases the amount of fat in the liver; can overstress the pancreas, causing damage; causes myopia (nearsightedness); causes tendons to become brittle; causes headaches, including migraines, and can cause hormonal imbalance."

There are yet other effects. Suffice it to say that sugar may be sweet for the tongue but traumatic for the body as a whole. Having a sweet tooth can be quite deadly, not just for your figure, but to your health as a whole. So, be sweet to your body—and avoid those sweets!

'Simple is beautiful' in The CompanY's 'Storybook'

BY RICKY T. GALLARDO

ONE of the prized achievements in recording is longevity. Harder than coming up with certified hits is how artists are able to sustain their momentum.

Since the vocal group The CompanY debuted with the song "Everlasting Love" in the early 90s', it has released albums annually. "Pakisabi Na Lang," "Muntik Na Kitang Minahal" and "Now That I Have You" are some of the songs the group has transformed into modern classics.

Respect

At the same time, its members have also earned the respect of their peers because of their knack for reinvention. Their desire to spread their wings a little wider everytime they come out with a new project has allowed the group to consistently elevate their music to higher levels.

But for the past two years, while they still awed their audiences with their harmonious blending in concerts, all was quiet on the recording front. After all the "recycling-themed" albums they recorded, Andrei Castillo, Annie Quintos, Cecille Bautista, Moy Ortiz, Reuben Laurente and Sweet Plantado decided to take a break from doing cover versions of popular English songs in the recording booth. Or so it seemed.

In reality, The CompanY tried to stretch things a bit too much with a follow-up that ended in naught. "Louie Ocampo Songbook," "PoPcapella," and "Recycle Deluxe: Cinemascope" only got as far as the pre-production phase before they were scrapped.

THE COMPANY. Knack for reinvention

Problems

"Before, it was BMG Hongkong which called the shots. They decided which artist to approve for recording. But when BMG Australia took over, that's when we started having problems," Moy explains. Frustrated over these recording miscarriages, The CompanY asked to be released from BMG early this year.

Then doors started opening. Their manager Boy Abunda and long-time collaborators Margot and Edith Gallardo got them a six-album deal with Viva Music, which came with their own label, Pop Art Music. And call it perfect timing: the collaboration of Moy and Edith, "Pagdating Ng Panahon," became this year's biggest hit song.

"These developments gave me the courage to write original compositions again. Because of the revivals trend, I didn't think the buying public would appreciate new materials. 'Pagdating Ng Panahon' changed that perception," Moy discloses.

The next question was about the direction that this new album should take. Known for its high-concept productions and avante-garde arrangements, The CompanY decided to take the road less traveled and record the songs it used to do when it started.

21 sessions

"We felt that it was about time we get back to doing original Pinoy compositions that are straightforward and hit the Pinoy emotions," explains Reuben, who gets to sing the carrier cut, "Pag Nagkataon." Annie adds, "It took 21 sessions in all with Viva, Margot and the group to hammer down the details for our comeback. In the end, we decided to record songs that had an OPM feel *sans* the frills."

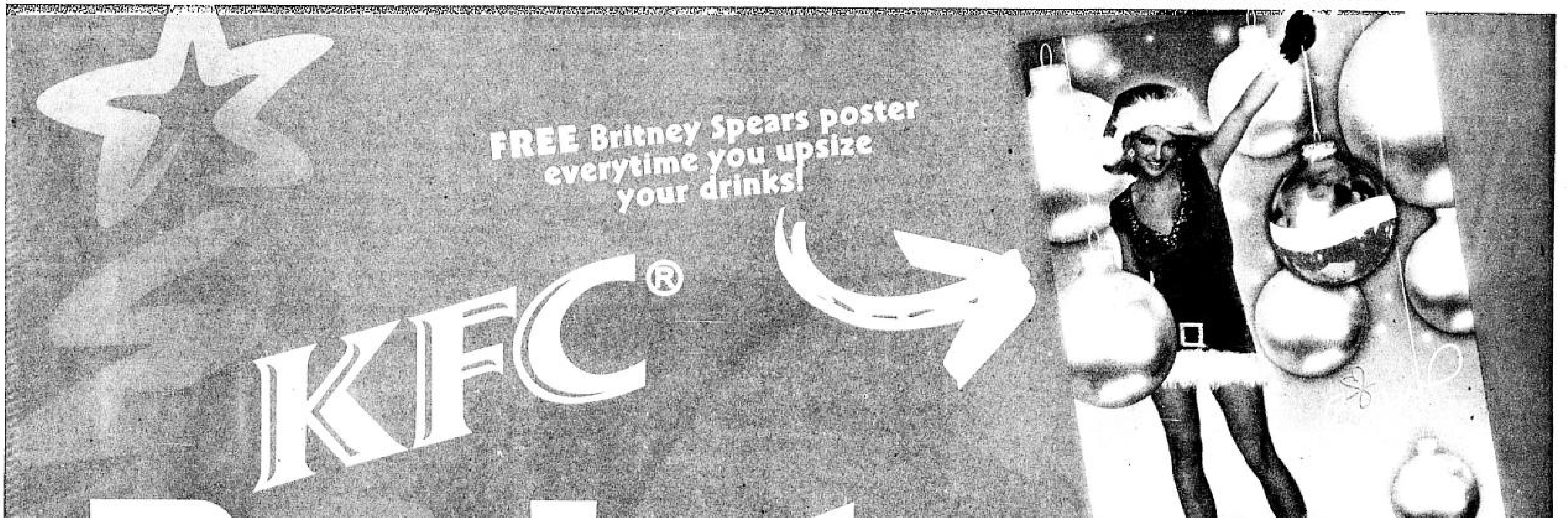
So as not to tax old subjects, the team drew inspiration from different art forms that tell mini-stories. The result is "Storybook," a 12-song compilation that's a buffet of different influences. In it are dashes of pop, adult contemporary, smooth jazz, and a big chunk of "heart-tugging,-straight-to-the-point" lyrics that have The CompanY relying on the strength of its songwriting and vocal dynamism alone.

"We got the title from one of Rupert Holmes' albums. He wrote music that told short stories with specific circumstances. Like it, 'Storybook' is a collage of different tales that capture the many faces of love and life," Sweet smiles.

Recording the album took two months and has a story all its own. "Since the songs are inspired by art and people's stories, we had to explain and internalize the subtexts to our writers and arrangers before recording. *para maintindihan nila ang* intention *ng bawat kanta*," Cecille recalls.

"People were expecting something theatrical and artsy. We thought we'd be as unpredictable as ever by saying 'Simple is beautiful,'' Moy affirms.

"In effect, 'Storybook' is about life's continuing adventures, and how our emotions are cultivated by the experiences that we all share—like love, like getting hurt, like being loved in return," Andrei beams.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'A Lauds Christmas' encourages peaceful contemplation of God's grace

By Noelani Torre

WE must confess that it lulled us to somnolence at first, this Christmas music collection by Father Arnel dC. Aquino of the Society of Jesus. "A Lauds Christmas," produced by the Jesuit Communications Foundation Inc. and the Jesuit Music Ministry, isn't exactly as hair-raisingly grand as Handel's "Messiah," but it is stirring nevertheless. So although we nodded off after the first few tracks, a second hearing made us realize how much we had missed.

16 tracks

Made up of 16 tracks with music composed by various artists, "Lauds" is characterized from beginning to end by the smooth piano playing of Arnel dC. Aquino, S.J. His style is deemed "celebrated and recognized," as Nemy Que, S.J. notes in the album's introduction of sorts.

The music here is purely instrumental, with flute and percussion accompaniment and some additional touches from the synthesizer. The lyrics for each piece are provided in the inlay, some of which were written by none other than the noted Onofre "Mr. Pagsi" Pagsanhan. Thus one can sing along if one is so inclined.

Pagsanhan wrote the lyrics to the first track entitled "Noong Paskong Una." It is a short piece, soft and reminiscent of past tender scenes, and it sets the tone for the rest of the collection.

STAGE director Onofre Pafsanhan wrote some of the lyrics.

Here we first encounter Aquino's sensitive piano playing, which we will hear all throughout.

The flute, delicately played by Jay Gomez, also contributes musical color here and there. The words are very much appropriate as well in their brevity and simplicity.

Muted anticipation

'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime," is based on a 16th century French folk melody that, to us at least, is semi-familiar. It conveys a sense of muted anticipation and embodies the words of the lyrics, particularly the last line which goes: "Come kneel before the radiant Child, who brings you beauty, peace, so mild."

Our favorites include tracks five to eight, 11, and the last three. One of our reasons for choosing these particular track, is that they are not as saturated with synthesizer music as the others.

The fifth, for example, "Himig ng Hangin" (words and music by Jandi Arboleda), although beginning with the synthesizer, soon returns to plain piano playing. This is a soothing piece, it evokes the feel of the cool December wind.

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel" (track six) is an old choral favorite and is in turn sombre then hopeful. The flute resurfaces clearly in the seventh track, "The Hands that First Held Mary's Child" (words by William Waller and music by Manoling V. Francisco, S.J.), which we appreciate, being by this time a tad weary of the synthesizer effects. Also, we like the hushed wonder and praise inherent in the piece.

Familiar carol

"Diwa ng Pasko" (words and music by Ramon Tapales), is a familiar and much-loved Filipino carol, and it is particularly enjoyable to hear its light and festive melody. "Panginoon Hanggang Kailan?" (words by Danilo B. Isidro, S.J. and music by Fruto Ll. Ramirez, S.J.), the 11th track, bears the distinction of being the least "enhanced" with synthesizer music. The piano is truly the star here and Aquino's playing succeeds in making us feel the sadness and wistfulnesss of the plaint.

"The Work of Christmas" (track 14) by Jandi Arboleda is quite lyrical and "Oyayi" (15) by Aquino himself is rippling, tranquil and restful.

The last track, "Gloria" (words and music by Jandi Arboleda and Norman Agatep), starts slowly but gathers speed and power as it unfolds. Some themes, though, remind us of some of Ryan Cayabyab's compositions. Still, in this piece the synthesizer does not overpower the piano and everything ends with the proper Filipino flourish.

Season of truth and light

One might wonder, what it is that we have against the synthesizer which is surely a useful thing? Well, the answer is nothing, really. It is only that it somehow gives an air of artificiality to the music. This being about Christmas and all, let's just say that anything artificial doesn't jibe with the season of truth and light.

We are not saying that "The Lauds Christmas" has a sense of falseness about it. This is obviously a labor of love and every note rings true with the artists' sincerity. It's just a pity that Aquino's fine piano playing is at times overshadowed by lesser elements.

We like this collection, all in all, though we usually prefer our Christmas music to be a bit more robust and energetic. There is much to be said after all, for the peaceful contemplation of God's grace and the quiet but intense anticipation and celebration of the Christ child's birth.

HK movies, Chinese stars sweep Taiwan's Oscars

HUALIEN, Taiwan—Hong Kong-made movies swept the top prizes at the Chinese-language version of the Oscars in Taiwan on Saturday, while two classmates from China scooped up best actor and actress awards.

Four trophies

"Durian Durian" and "Lan Yu" stole the spotlight of the ceremony, with four Golden Horse trophies each.

"Durian Durian," by Hong Kong director Fruit Chan, took the best picture award.

The best actress title went to Qin Hailu for her lead role in "Durian Durian," a story about two illegal Chinese immigrants struggling for survival in the back streets of Hong Kong.

Qin won another Golden Horse under the best new actor/actress category.

"I like horse very much. I hope the two horses will help my future career better and steadier," said Qin. Overcome with emotion, she burst into tears on stage.

Hong Kong arthouse director Stanley Kwan won the best director award for "Lan Yu," a gritty drama tackling two Chinese taboos—homosexuality and the 1989 bloody crackdown on student-led protesters in Beijing.

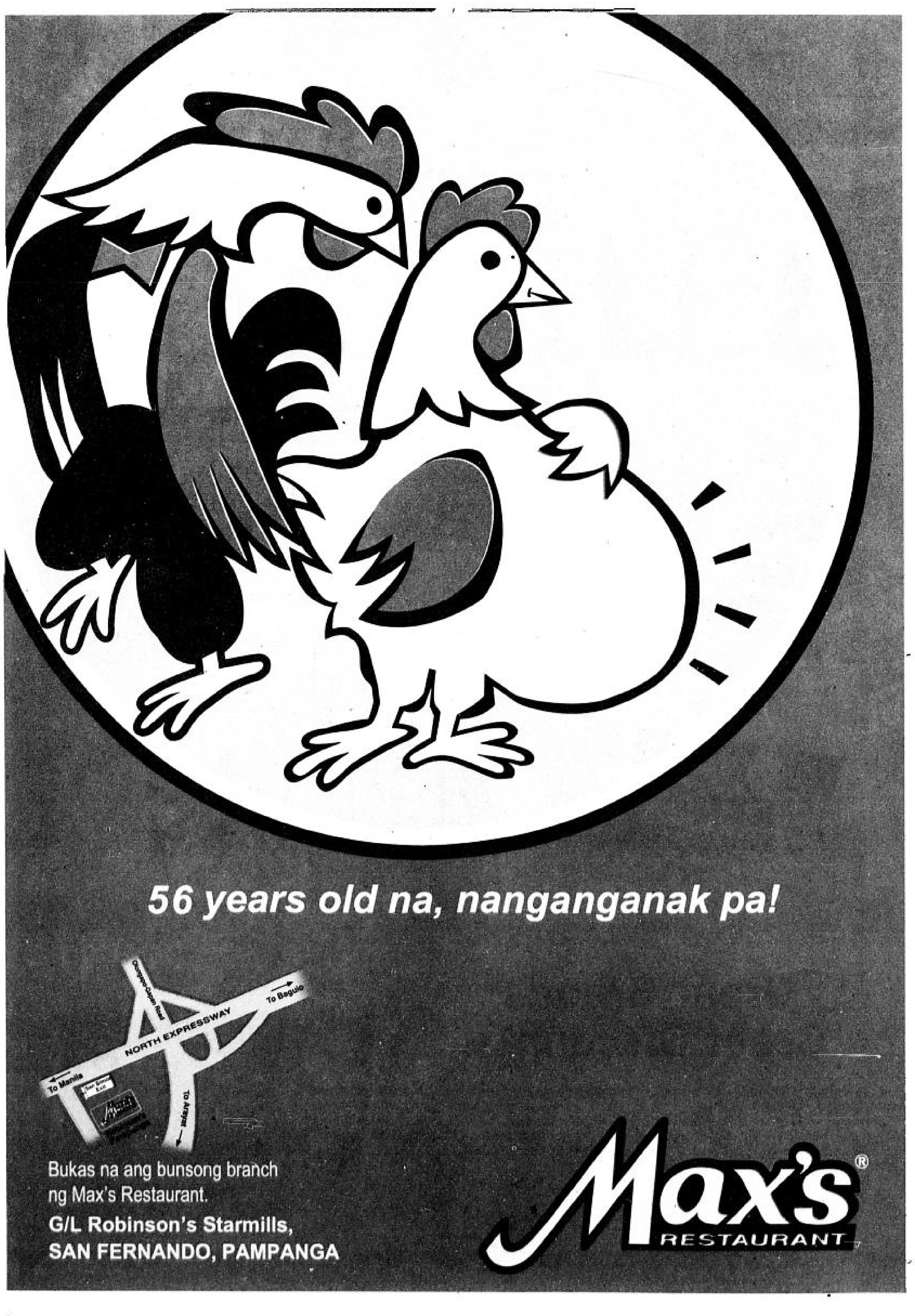
Best actor

Actor Liu Ye, once a classmate of Qin in Beijing, took the best actor award for his role in "Lan Yu."

Based on the online gay novel "Beijing Story," "Lan Yu" is about the tortured 10-year romance between two Beijing men. It also won best screenplay adaptation and best film editing.

Taiwan director Tsai Ming-liang gained two special mentions from the jurors for his "What Time Is It There," a tale of urban life in Taipei.

Tsai's film was the only one nominated best picture from Taiwan, where the once-thriving movie industry has shown no signs of a revival. *Reuters*



Bukas na ang bunsong branch
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G/L Robinson's Starmills,
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Digital filmfest in the works

By Rachel Nalus

THE DIGITAL revolution is upon us and it's changing the face of cinema as we know it. It's modifying the rules of the game and allowing those little players in the sidelines a crack at their big break. Now, film rookies, indie directors, and major studio players can jostle it out in the same arena.

Technological innovations

Digital filmmaking first entered the scene in 1996 on the heels of exciting technological innovations. Film mavericks caught the digital vibe, churning out well-made films shot on digital cameras that are smaller and cheaper than the typical 35mm camera. It heralded a new, radical era in filmmaking, a movement tagged as the Digital Revolution.

Technology provided filmmakers with powerful new tools that allowed them to create high-quality films on a low budget. Nowadays, renegade filmmakers are shooting images and recording sound with digital video cameras, and using the latest software to edit, mix and create special effects on home computers.

This stripped-down, bare-bones approach to making films is a far cry from the dominant Hollywood paradigm of huge production bills and expensive, bulky cameras. The arrival of affordable Digital Video (DV) camcorders has created unprecedented ultra-low-budget production possibilities.

New cameras

Beyond the low budgets and new cameras, what the digital revolution really means for the average man dreaming of becoming the next Lino Brocka or plain tired of the run-of-the-mill cineplex fare, is a crack at making the movie he's always wanted to do or see. Anyone can be a filmmaker. The digital medium amplifies the possibilities for those who have no access to professional, accepted filmmaking techniques and equipment, or those who simply cannot afford to shoot in 35mm, or even in 16mm.

Speaking before a Cannes Film Festival forum, Iranian filmmaker Samira Makhmalbaf remarked about this significant implication of the digital revolution: "Twenty years ago, if someone wanted to enter the profession of filmmaking she would have been asked if she knew its technique. If she did not, she would have been told that she was illiterate about half of the art. Some 20 years later, the only question she needs to answer is if she has art."

Free from the burden of financing and figures, more than at any time in the history of film, filmmakers can own and control the means of production and post-production. Digital also allows filmmakers, whether first-timers or experienced, to experiment with the art form and perfect the craft.

Minimal cost

With DV, a filmmaker can shoot more footage, or shoot again and again until he makes it right, at very minimal cost. Something you cannot do with traditional film stock which costs a thousand times more than a digital tape.

The impact of digital production is also seen in the realism of the performance. Small and unobtrusive, digital video has a markedly different psychological effect on the performance. Compared to acting before a traditional film camera with the unavoidable phalanx of assistants hovering next to it, digital video liberates the actors.

Minus the gawking crew and obtrusiveness of the studio camera, actors aren't acting for the camera but for each other. The end result is a work less make-believe and with a lot more realism and spontaneity.

The Digital Revolution has only just begun. Its other significant and wide-ranging effects are yet to unravel. So hold on to your seats and keep your eyes on the screen.

The very first digital film festival in the Philippines, ".MOV," will showcase some of the landmark films in the history of digital filmmaking, including the works of Rob Nilsson, Kidlat Tahimik, Todd Verow, and Dogme 95. The festival will have its run on Jan. 23-30 at the Greenbelt Cinema 1, Makati. Call Filmless Films at 433-3496, 921-8434, & oracafe@rocketmail.com. Visit the festival website at www.mov.moviespage.com.

RUSTOM Padilla (standing right) watches over Vic Diaz as Armando Goyena (left) lashes out at him in "Yamashita."

Roles to die for in the Metro Manila Film Festival

By Remy M. Umerez

THIS year's Metro Manila Film Festival has a line-up of entries that are well conceived and produced. The event is also a showcase for actors.

Demands

We talked to Cesar Montano, Dina Bonnevie and Rustom Padilla about the demands of their respective roles. How was it working with acclaimed directors like Marilou Diaz Abaya, Chito Roño and Tikoy Aguiluz?

Cesar Montano stars in "Bagong Buwan" a co-production venture between Star Cinema and Bahaghari Productions. It tackles the conflict between the military and the Muslims, especially the MILF, the group depicted in the movie.

Just like in the landmark epic movie "Rizal," Cesar plays a doctor forced to pick up the gun and fight when his own child is killed during an encounter between the military and Muslims.

No other director makes Cesar as acutely aware of the many possibilities he can explore in portraying a role as Marilou Diaz-Abaya, with whom he has worked on two previous films, "Rizal" and "Muro Ami."

"She is more than a director. She is a mentor, a mother, a confidant, a critic and a friend to me. I've learned a lot more about acting from her. It is an endless process of discovering new acting techniques, *palaging may natutunan akong bago,*" he explains.

Controlled

"My acting becomes effective and controlled if Marilou is my director. She gives me enough time to understand my character, months before filming starts. She prepares me emotionally for the role. My understanding of Muslims used to be very limited, but Marilou taught me how to *live* my character, instead of only acting it."

He stresses that "Bagong Buwan" is pro-peace—the New Moon itself symbolizes hope and peace.

For her part, Dina Bonnevie plays Lupe in Nick Joaquin's "Tatarin." Even before Viva offered the role to Dina, she had done thorough research into her character.

The movie's story is about the sexual awakening of Lupe, since at that time, women were subordinate to their husbands. The film is also about a woman who discovers her rights as a wife.

First time

It is the first time for Dina to be directed by Tikoy Aguiluz and she finds him a workaholic. "It's not that easy shooting the whole day until five the next morning," she sighs.

There were lots of arguments on the set between Dina and Tikoy, especially when she noticed that some scenes were being focused on more for their sexual aspect.

"I am an actress, not a bold star. At one point he hinted he wanted more skin exposure and I told him I have inverted nipples. But I was willing to do the erotic, pagan dance, the *tatarin* ritual, because it is a highlight. For that sequence I studied dance under Edna Vida," she recalls.

Had Tikoy insisted, body doubles would have been used. But the presence of Rica Peralejo and Patricia Javier was enough to take care of the bold scenes Tikoy wanted.

Finally, add the name of Rustom Padilla to the roster of actors who have shifted to villainous roles on screen. The character he plays in "Yamashita" is pure evil. Forever garbed in black and with a offbeat hairdo, Rustom felt like the reincarnation of an animé character.

"My role is well-defined. I am consistently bad, from start to finish," he says. Rustom has been handled by Chito Roño in a television series, and says Roño will stop at nothing to get the right projection he wants from an actor. Rustom agrees that he is a perfectionist, which explains why his movies are generally exceptional.

Freestyle performs at Hardrock Cafe Makati on Dec. 20

MONTAGE

GENTXT is hosting two pre-Christmas parties as part of its Holiday Seaon activties—"Gentxt Winter Rush" at Wherelse today at the Hotel Intercon and "Grilla Christmas Party" in Libis on Dec. 19.

In celebration of Hardrock Cafe's sixth year, the first 70 Gentxt members will get in for free during the anniversary concert series featuring Freestyle on Dec. 20 and Side A on Dec. 29

To check on Gentxt's exciting offers and to register online for a free card, log on to www.gentxt.com.ph or call 730-1000.

Lani Misalucha at Festival Mall

Guess?USA and Manila Philharmonic stage the last leg of their mall tour this year at the Filinvest Festival Mall today at 4 p.m. The series features local pop stars Anna Fegi, Luke Mejares, Jett Pangan, Lani Misalucha and Nolyn Cabahug with the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Prof. Rodel Colmenar.

Illustra's hotel gigs

It's always a big private party when Illustra takes the stage. Formerly known as the Channels band, the seven-man musical group offers a repertoire of retro –'70s songs to '80s music, the techno sounds of the '90s and the dance music of the moment.

This month, the group makes the rounds of five-star hotels. Illustra performs Tuesdays at the Intercon, Wednesdays at Westin Philippine Plaza and Fridays and Saturdays at the Mandarin Oriental.

Meanwhile, Hyperbeat performs Mondays at Dish (Rockwell), Tuesdays at Siete Pecados, Wednesdays and Saturdays at The Conservatory and Thursdays at Strumm's Makati.

Republic benefit

"Republic of Malate: Live at the Ruins" will be staged today at 9 p.m. for the benefit of the displaced employees of the Republic of Malate, which was razed recently.

The concert features Color It Red, Oasys, Noli Aurillo, Cynthia Alexander, Strawberry Fields, Mike and Noah, Moonstars 88, Jun Lopito and Noli Aurillo, MYMP and Brownman Revival.

For details, call Good News Cafe at 551-7251.

Pomeranz at Eastwood City Walk

Multi-platinum artist David Pomeranz will be the featured artist at "Wave 89.1 WIMS (Walk In Movie Series) today at 9 p.m. at the Eastwod City Walk.

His repertoire includes hits and selected cuts from his Philippine made albums—"Born for You," "The Eyes of Christmas," and his latest "On This Day" under MCA Universal Music.

ILLUSTRA. The former Channels band performs at five-star hotels.

This album has a special significance for him since it was during the initial stages of production that his wife Kelly announced her date with the stork. This inspired David to write more romantic melodies.

Theater mall opens

The Music Museum Group Inc., a prime mover in the live entertainment scene, is engaged in a new endeavor: the Greenhills Theater Mall located in the heart of the Greenhills Shopping Center. The Mall is a shopping and theater complex that offers the bargain opportunities that Greenhills is known for. Besides housing a number of boutiques, shops and many more, the complex has two new movie theaters that will show the latest films. It is a 255-seater theater complete with digital sound, upholstered seats, wall-to-twall carpeting and other amenities.

Meanwhile, starting tomorrow at 5 a.m., a Simbang Gabi mass will be held at the Al Fresco Lobby.

Joey's Christmas album

Joey's second Christmas offering "Joey's Christmas Rhythms 2, Making Spirits Bright" starts with guitarist Lee Ritenour's rendition of "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" followed by an R&B version of "I'll Be Home for Christmas" featuring the deep soul vocals of Will Downing. Guitarist Joyce Cooling then takes center stage with her rendition of the classic "The Christmas Song."

Other tracks in the album are Gerald Albright's "This Christmas," Al Jarreau's "What Child is This?" Richard Elliot's "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" and Dave Grusin's "E Nuestra Navidad."

Gala premiere

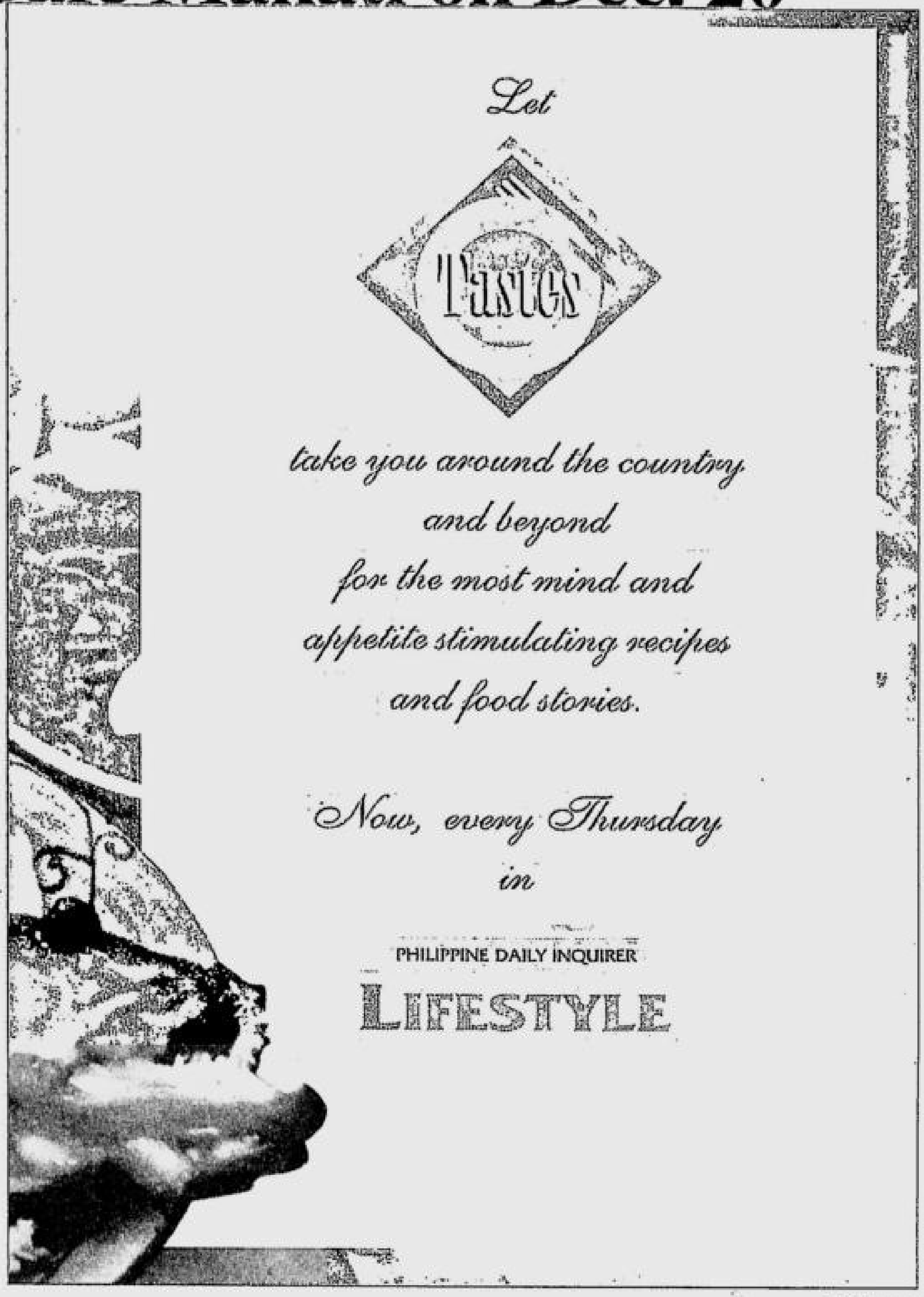
Twentieth Century Fox presents the gala premiere of "Behind Enemy Lines," starring Gene Hackman and Owen Wilson on Dec. 19 at SM Megamall.

In The US, "the film has been playing to cheers and applause across the nation," says Bruce Snyder, Fox's domestic distribution president.

The movie tells the story of Lt. Chris Burnett (Weilson), a top naval aviator who is frustrated that fragile geo-politics have kept him from what he knows best: flying F/A-18 Superhornet jets into

FREESTYLE/p.H8

BRICKMAN AND CUNETA. Instant rapport.



RN65843

'Serendipity' is sweet and frothy

By CHRISTY LEMIRE

NEW YORK—How apropos that "Serendipity" takes its title from an Upper East Side restaurant famous for its decadent desserts.

Destined lovers

This story of destined lovers is as sweet and frothy as the frozen hot chocolate the place is known for—and just as likely to give you a tummy ache afterward.

It takes place in a Manhattan that is so idyllic, so romantic, it probably never existed—and it certainly doesn't now. Shots of the World Trade Center towers in a version that screened at the Toronto Film Festival have been excised since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks for maximum moviegoing happiness.

What's left is practically a promotional video for New York tourism, wrapped up as a chick flick. Snowflakes gently fall, birds take flight and lampposts come alight at the most opportune moments.

Reveling in all this splendor are Jonathan (John Cusack) and Sara (Kate Beckinsale). They meet over the last pair of black gloves in the Bloomingdale's shopping rush a few days before Christmas.

Cosmic connection

It's 1990, and Jonathan and Sara are both seeing other people, but experience such a cosmic connection that they feel compelled to spend a few magical hours together, ice skating in Central Park and gazing adoringly at each other over frozen hot chocolate at—you guessed it—Serendipity.

Sara tells Jonathan she likes this restaurant because she likes the meaning of the word—fortunate accident—then proceeds to bang us over the head with all kinds of mumbo-jumbo about fate and destiny and how each of us has a special someone out there, waiting.

They acknowledge they're attracted to each other, but can't do anything about it. So they agree to a little game: She writes her name and number in a book ("Love in the Time of Cholera"); he does the same on a $5 bill; and they put these items into circulation. If the money comes back to Sara, or the book comes back to Jonathan, they'll know they're meant to be together.

Flash forward several years later. Jonathan's still in New York, works as an ESPN producer, and is about to marry the beautiful Hallie (Bridget Moynahan). Sara has moved to San Francisco, works as a counselor and is about to marry a self-absorbed New Age musician named Lars (John Corbett from "Sex and the City").

Best friends

Jonathan and Sara start thinking about each other and seek each other out, with Jonathan's best friend Dean (Jeremy Piven) helping him and Sara's best friend Eve (Molly Shannon) helping her.

If you've seen the ads for this movie (or seen the movies it rips off, including "An Affair to Remember," "When Harry Met Sally . . ." and "Sleepless in Seattle"), you know there will be a series of excruciating near-misses before our two lovebirds are reunited.

Director Peter Chelsom redeems himself somewhat from the debacle that was "Town & Country," which also took place in a romanticized New York. "Serendipity" is lively and plucky and, thankfully, short.

There are a few funny moments, most of which come from Eugene Levy as a scheming Bloomingdale's sales clerk, and he livens every scene he's in simply by showing up. Lars' self-important stage performance and music video also are good for a couple of laughs.

But many of the laughs from first-time screenwriter Marc Klein feel painfully forced.

Easy chemistry

Cusack and Piven have an easy chemistry—no surprise, having grown up together in Chicago and performed opposite each other for years. But Piven's role is so large, he threatens to overtake the leads. And as an obituary writer for The New York Times, some of his jokes about dead people are especially uncomfortable now.

Individually, Cusack and Beckinsale are charming. He's back in that lovestruck, overeager-puppy-dog mode of "Say Anything" and "High Fidelity." She's lovely, flirty and elusive. But they have so little in common, it's hard to figure out what binds them together.

Maybe it's the sugar rush from the frozen hot chocolate. *AP*

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Jim Carrey to seek US citizenship

CARREY. Credits the US for his success.

LOS ANGELES—Canadian-born funnyman Jim Carrey said he loves the United States so much he plans to seek dual citizenship.

The 39-year-old actor told The Associated Press he wants to become an American citizen because he credits the nation for his success.

Dreams

"To me, this country defined me," Carrey said in a recent interview. "This country allowed my dreams to come true."

The star of the upcoming drama "The Majestic" and last year's "Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas" said he is still early in the application process, which can take up to a year.

He joked that he's already memorizing all the US state capitals.

Growing up in a Toronto suburb, the actor said he always admired the United States, particularly for the entertainment it produced.

Big brother

"I always felt growing up that America was a big brother, protecting us in the school yard," he said. "And also, all the things I loved to watch and was influenced by were American."

Carrey added that it's equally important for him to honor his Canadian roots by retaining his original citizenship.

"Canada is my home," he said. "It was a tremendous place to grow up. But I love this country . . . It's the best place to be." *AP*

Freestyle performs at Hardrock Cafe Makati on Dec. 20

(From page H7)

combat. But during a routine reconnaissance mission,. Burnett photographs something no one was meant to see and is shot down. Admiral Reigart (Hackman) makes the wrenching decision to set aside the rules of the tightly-controlled world in which he operates and risks his career to launch a renegade rescue mission to save the life of one soldier.

Sharon teams up with Brickman

Sharon Cuneta collaborates with international pianist Jim Brickman in her latest album "All I Ever Want" released by BMG Pilipinas.

Sharon, who has set her sights on the Asian market, works with Jim Brickman for the first time.

Sharon and Jim met in Hong Kong when the Megastar did her recording of "Where's the Good in Goodbye" written and composed by Jim. The two had instant rapport during their first meeting.

Jim described Sharon as "amazing." "She is an extremely warm person. She is also a most generous collaborator. She gives so much."

"Where's the Good in Goodbye" was part of the five songs Jim submitted to Sharon. BMG executives felt that Jim and Sharon's chemistry was so good they opted to use the song as the album's carrier single. (*Compiled by Edmund L. Sicam*)

See fireworks light up the night sky.

Fireworks shows at Ayala Center Makati every Friday at 8 pm and every Saturday and Sunday at 7 pm until December 22 at the Glorietta 4 Park. At the Alabang Town Center, it's on every Saturday and Sunday at 7 pm until Dec. 30 at the Town Plaza. At the Ayala Center Cebu, see the lights at 8 pm on Dec. 16 and 23 in the lagoon area.

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Dec. 14-22 (11 am to 9 pm weekdays/10 am to 10 pm weekends)
Dec. 23 (10 am to 12 mn)

Ayala Center Cebu
Dec. 19-21 (10 am to 9 pm)
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New 'Ocean's Eleven' is loaded with star power

By Bob Tourtellotte

CLONEY, ROBERTS AND PITT. Good-looking stars having a good time.

LOS ANGELES—Several of Hollywood's coolest and hottest stars—George Clooney, Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt and Matt Damon—look to break the spell that "Harry Potter" has cast over US box offices with the crime caper "Ocean's Eleven," the only major movie debut this weekend.

Independent dramas

But despite all the promotion commotion engulfing "Ocean's," it's not the only film seeing the curtain come up. Independent dramas "The Business of Strangers," starring Stockard Channing, and "Pinero" with Benjamin Bratt open in major cities before spreading out across the United States in upcoming weeks.

"Ocean's" is a remake of the 1960 caper movie "Ocean's 11" that starred Hollywood's infamous "rat pack" of Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., and Joey Bishop, among others, all in suits that never seemed to wrinkle. But the second film about a group of con men looking to rob Las Vegas casinos bears little resemblance to the first.

"Those other guys really had their own vibe," said Pitt, "and we didn't dare try to emulate that."

Nightclubs

Who really remembers what the original was about? It wasn't a big hit or Oscar-winning drama. Frank and the boys were working the nightclubs of Vegas, and with little to do during the day except sit in the steam rooms, they decided to make a movie.

"The first movie is remembered, probably more for who was in it" than for what it was, said director Steven Soderbergh, who won the best director Oscar last year for drama "Traffic."

But before any moviegoer gets the idea that this new "Ocean's Eleven" has Oscar aspirations, it doesn't. It, too, is all about good-looking movie stars having a good time.

Clooney plays Danny Ocean, and Roberts, his ex-wife Tess, who has taken up with casino owner Terry Benedict (Andy Garcia) while Danny has been in jail.

The story picks up when Danny is released on bail. He heads to Las Vegas looking to regain his girl, and pick up a little money by robbing Benedict, who owns the Bellagio, MGM Grand and the Mirage hotel and casinos, of $160 million.

Before he can pull off his scheme, however, he needs a crew of thieves, which is where the likes of Pitt, Damon, Don Cheadle, Casey Affleck, Scott Caan, Bernie Mac and

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Interesting but uneven line-up at Cinemanila

By Rito P. Asilo

THIS year's Cinemanila International Film Festival, the third since 1999, opened its doors to film enthusiasts last Dec. 7 with Korea's "Chunhyang," France's "Under the Sand" and the Bosnian-Serbian-Croatian-Belgian film, "No Man's Land."

The list of films shown in the festival is a hodge-podge of quirky, dark, surreal, funny, sexy, substantial and even pretentious film features from around the world.

Clueless

After two years of doing this, you'd think the organizers would have learned how to run the festival smoothly by now.

In the first week of the festival, people assigned to some Cinemanila booths seemed clueless about the goings-on and what the festival was all about. Film buffs from all nationalities trooped to the Greenbelt and Glorietta 4 cinemas to watch contemporary films and classics, but many of the people manning these booths didn't have answers to questions regarding festival activities.

Of course, the screenings were subject to change. But some people entered the moviehouse expecting to watch a particular film, only to find that a different film was being screened.

But festival-goers took all of this in stride. After all, it isn't everyday that lovers of films get to watch movies from Turkey, Norway, Sri Lanka, the Czech Republic, Belgium, Israel or Malaysia.

When we asked which of the four series of the Regina Ziegler-produced "Erotic Tales" was going to be screened, they didn't even know how to answer us. "Huh, *apat ba 'yan?*," said the girl by the counter, then told us matter-of-factly that they couldn't find the film in the program. We had to tell them to look under "Tribute to Regina Ziegler" before their eyes lit up.

Details

There were problems with sound. After the screening of New Zealand's "The Price of Milk," lead actress Danielle Cormack had to explain some details about the storyline because the sound went on and off, and on again. Sometimes, you would hear all the sounds of doors closing, cars crashing, cows mooing, winds blowing, and everything else expected from the film, except the dialogue itself.

CAST OF "DISORIENTED." None of them got paid for appearing in the movie.

ALIWALAS. Director of "Disoriented."

Once, the screening had to be stopped because of the sound problem.

Cormack, a leading light in contemporary New Zealand cinema and stage who is a familiar face among the viewers of "Xena: Warrior Princess" because of her recurring role in the TV series, said she was disappointed that the audience was not able to watch the film in its entirety. But she was gracious enough to crack jokes and answer questions from the audience.

Make no mistake, though. The festival is a laudable effort. It's an eye-opener for filmgoers who are used to watching nothing but predictable, budget-overblown Hollywood film fare.

We were glad that more Asian films are taking part in these festivals. Of course, we adore the quirky French comedies, the dark Eastern European movies, the surrealistic plots of Latin American films, and the irreverent indies from the US and Canada, but Asian films bring the issues closer to home.

We all know so much about American film culture but, apart from the simple heart-warning Iranian films and the testy, experimental Australian films, we know so little of the film cultures of our neighboring countries in Asia.

Crowd-pleasers

In the festival, the films were interesting but uneven. And except for a number of films, most were safe, almost mainstream, crowd-pleasers that could enjoy a decent commercial run in a mall cineplex.

In the first few days of the festival, only a number of the films in competition were shown. We watched John Williams' "Firefly Dreams" (Japan), Kim Jee

INTERESTING/p.I3

New 'Ocean's . . .

(From page I1)

Carl Reiner come in.

And that's about all one needs to know. The guys are always, seemingly, screwing up. But trying to figure out just what's a screw up and what is part of the con makes this new "Ocean's" more than just a movie with a lot of pretty faces.

Award possibilities

On the more serious side of filmgoing are "Business of Strangers" and "Pinero," both of which do have some award possibilities for its stars in the upcoming award season.

"Strangers," which was an audience favorite at the 2001 Sundance Film Festival, stars Channing as an aggressive sales executive named Julie Styron, who is led to question her life when she is holed up with a temporary assistant for one night in an airport hotel while on a business trip.

The assistant, Paula (Julia Stiles), is the opposite of Styron. Ivy league educated, unsure of what she wants, wary of big business and contemptuous of Styron and people like her.

Yet, Paula's life is not all she makes it out to be, and over the course of the night as a young businessman and associate of Styron's joins the pair, the two women learn they may be more alike than they first think.

The movie, which has only nine cast members, is "Sort of like a short story turned to film," Channing told Reuters. "I found it very fresh . . . interesting, funny and inventive, and if you're intrigued by it, then you got to do it."

Much like "Strangers," "Pinero" was shot on a very low-budget but with a strong cast who took their roles because the material was rich more so than because of the starpower involved.

Nuyorican movement

The movie covers the tumultuous life and career of Puerto Rican-born writer and poet Miguel Pinero, who grew up in New York and lived on Manhattan's Lower East Side where he helped found the Nuyorican movement of the late 1980s and 1990s.

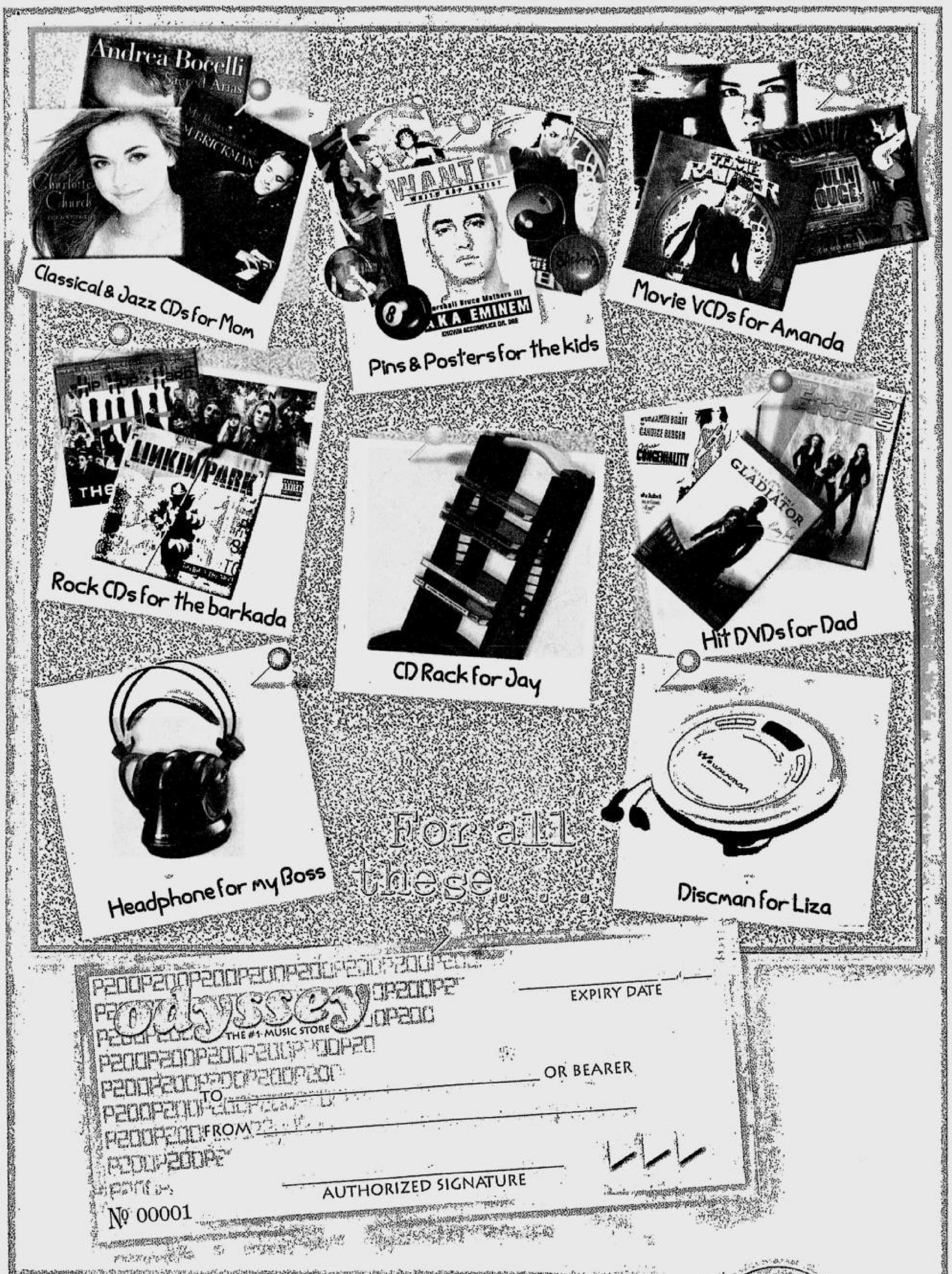
Pinero's most famous work was the play "Short Eyes," about his experiences in Sing-Sing prison where he spent time for petty theft. His other writing shed light on his troubles growing up as a Puerto Rican, on his life as a street hustler and petty crook and on sexual abuse he suffered as a kid.

"The dark and evil things that sometimes haunt us, are the very things that influenced his work and made it passionate and new and gritty and authentic," Bratt told Reuters.

For movie fans who think of Bratt as a clean-cut guy, which is what he usually plays in films, playing Pinero was a chance for him to stretch his talents. He spent two months working on the character, and several months before that reading Pinero.

"Physically, I let everything go. I lost 17 pounds, and let my beard and mustache grow," he said, "But I always recalled a warning from one of his friends: 'do not play Miguel Pinero as a one-dimensional man of the street. Yes, he could jive with the best of them, but he was also a remarkable intellectual."

So, this weekend, if movie fans are looking to be intellectually unchallenged, there's "Ocean's," there is also some food for thought cooking in the indie film world. *Reuters*



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Interesting but uneven line-up at Cinemanila

(From page I1)

Woon's "The Foul King," Im Kwon Taek's "Chunhyang" (Korea), Harry Sinclair's "The Price of Milk" (New Zealand), Fil-Am Francisco Aliwalas' "Disoriented" (USA) and six mini-films from Regina Ziegler's "Erotic Tales" (Germany).

In "Firefly Dreams," a teenager deals with family problems through rebellion. When her mother runs away with her lover, her father packs her off for the summer to work in a countryside inn owned by an aunt.

Seeing how miserable she is, her aunt assigns her to look after an Alzheimer's disease-stricken elderly woman. She forges an unlikely friendship with the old woman, discovers the colorful past of her new-found friend, falls in love with a country boy and gets burned, and learns some valuable lessons aboutloving, losing, and dealing with things she can't change, including separation and death.

Critical acclaim

Simple and beautifully photographed, this touching coming-of-age film earned critical acclaim, was nominated for Best Film, and won the Critic's Prize at the Czech Republic's Karlovy Vary International Film Festival.

The Korean films were Oriental twists on familiar Western stories.

"Chunhyang" is a visual retelling of a classic Korean folktale not unlike "Romeo and Juliet" or, say, "Cinderella." The sweet, romantic love story is a crowd-pleasing visual delight. It tells its story through traditional *pansori* music that is sometimes affecting and moving, but at other times grating and irritating.

It boasts of a visual-aural palette of colors, movement and heartfelt performances from likeable actors who transcend their fairytale characters and transform them into earthbound, tragedy-susceptible human beings. Some of the film images remind us of Akira Kurosawa's visual flair in 1990's "Dreams." (Yes, the one that had Martin Scorsese acting as Van Gogh in it.)

The film was nominated for Best Picture at last year's Cannes and this year's Singapore filmfests, and won the top prize at the Hawaii International Film Festival. It won the Best Director trophy in Singapore.

Strife

"The Foul King" is another crowd-pleaser. Kim Jee Woon's satire tells the story of an underperforming, plain-looking bank clerk whose inability to perform well or come to work on time makes him fodder for ceaseless taunts and insults from his boss.

He turns his aggression on his nighttime extra-curricular activities as a cruel, masked wrestling star whose matches are pre-arranged. Then love enters the picture, and all hell breaks loose. It's about overcoming seemingly insurmountable odds, with all the feel-good aspects of that familiar storyline—with a comic twist.

It won Best Film honors in Seongu and Cinefan, and won a special Young Cinema Award at the Singapore International Film Festival. It's a comic, more cerebral version of "Rocky" and "The Mighty Ducks," and felt more commercial than anything we'd seen in the festival.

Despite the technical problems during its initial screening, "The Price of Milk" didn't disappoint. Its a surreal look into a soon-to-be-married woman's fear of the uncertainty of plunging into marital bleach…err…bliss.

Magic

The second feature from the director (who's also an actor—he'll play Isildur in the much-anticipated "Lord of the Rings") of the award-winning "Topless Women Talk About Their Lives," which also starred Danielle Cormack, "Milk" is another fairytale love story, full of magic (sometimes literally!), unbelievably unpredictable, dark humor, beautiful images, a beautiful soundtrack featuring the Moscow Symphony Orchestra and top-rate performances from Cormack and lead actor Karl Urban (who could pass for Brad Pitt's brother) and the rest of the supporting cast (with their tongues firmly in cheek), all set in a rural dairy farm in glorious, cinematic splendor.

We were surprised to find the tone of the film distinctly different from the grunge feel of "Topless," and the urban violence of Lee Tamahori's "Once Were Warriors," another ground-breaking New Zealand film that has become a critical and commercial hit, even in the film festival circuit.

Consider these images: a bullet-proof quilt, a bag full of infants' shoes, a moving house, an egophobic dog that lives in a box and refuses to come out of it, an old woman who sleeps with eight feet of quilts over her, and an antagonistic best friend named Drosophila. Imagine the visual possibilities!

The difference between the two films, though, is in their scripts. While Tamahori's trenchant script (by Wiria Brown) worked within the confines of a well-told storyline, "Milk" didn't have a script at all when it started filming!

Quirkiness

Intrigued by the quirkiness of the storytelling, we asked Cormack what she thought of the script when she first read it. "There was no script," she admitted. She told us how they would get rough copies of the scenes to be shot 10 minutes before shooting!

She explained, "We had to work fast. We got the script as we shot along. We didn't know how the story was going to unfold. But it was exciting!" And it did look exciting on the big screen!

We asked her how much the film cost. She readily answered, "Thirty million pesos." That's roughly $600,000.

From Cormack, we learned that all films shot and made in New Zealand are subsidized by the country's Film Commission. Only four to seven films are produced each year. And to think the Philippines makes an average of 90 every year!

The technical problems didn't just happen with the screening of "The Price of Milk." When we went to watch the screening of Fil-Am director-lead actor Francisco Aliwalas' "Disoriented," which has been around the theater circuit (Fort Lauderdale, Hawaii, San Francisco, L.A., Chicago Festivals, among others) for sometime but makes its initial foray into the rounds of film festivals outside the US only in Cinemanila, producer Douglas Bachman had to apologize for the mess—and it wasn't even his fault!

It was attended by a good number of film buffs who were surprised that the simple, likeable, funny film about Filipino immigrants trying to find their voice and their mixed-up identities in a foreign land, was directed by a Filipino-American, and produced by an American (Bachman), who was also assistant director, bit actor and co-writer of the film.

Struggle

It tells the story of an All (Asian) American premed student's coming-of-age and his family's struggle to come to grips with the concept of the American Dream among non-Caucasians. It's light-hearted, funny and dramatic, with just enough melodrama and an engaging mix of characters to spice up the story.

What Bachman hopes, though, is that the film will be distributed in the Philippines. He admits that distributors in the US are reluctant to buy the film because of its non-traditional commercial appeal. When we asked how much it cost to produce the film, he said, "Oh, somewhere between 'Harry Potter' and the 'Blair Witch Project's' budget!" In fact, the film cost under a million dollars, and none of the actors got paid for their services. "Except for one production assistant who had to travel on location. I gave him $50," Bachman jokes.

He adds, "Despite beautiful reviews and good word of mouth, Hollywood isn't biting. So, what we do is 'self-distribution,' that is, we bring the film to the theaters."

If Bachman and Aliwalas had a difficult time distributing "Disoriented," Ziegler's "Erotic Tales" did not.

Different title

We saw quite a number of the four-part series, each with six 25-minute stories, during the laser disc craze in the '90s, under a different title ("Tales of Erotica"). For the production that we caught at Greenbelt, six famous directors from all over the world took a stab at erotic filmmaking in an uneven sextet of passionate stories. They were Melvin Van Peebles' "Vroom Vroom Vroom" (USA); Detlev Buck's "Elephants Never Forget" (Germany); Joe Stelling's "The Waiting Room" and "The Gas Station" (The Netherlands) and Georgi Shengelaya's "Georgian Grapes" (Georgia).

Among these, we truly enjoyed Joe Stelling's very funny, no-dialogue feature because of its irreverence and naughty fun. Even his actors, especially his lead, Eugene Bervoets, who looks like Australian-American Mel Gibson, deserve special mention. Van Peebles' autoerotica had the weakest impact on us.

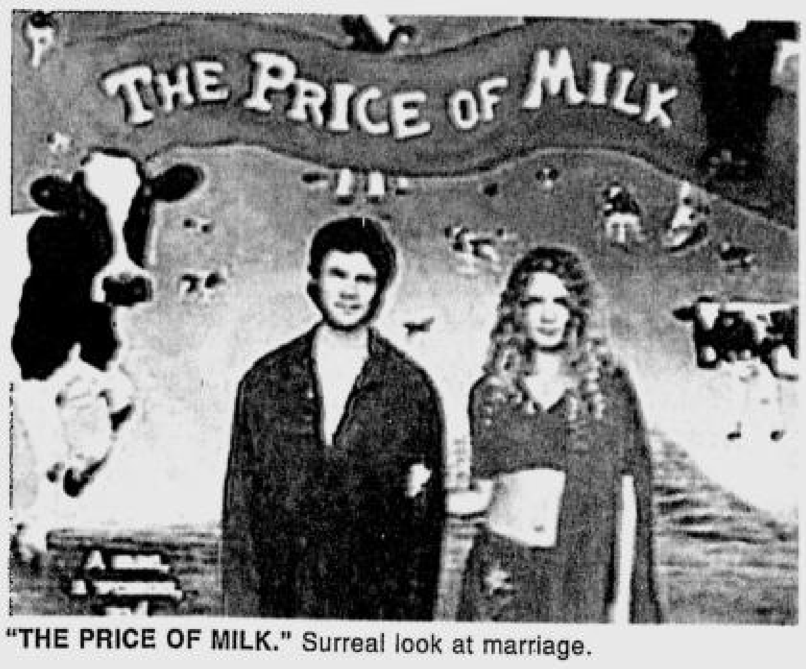
In the versions that we saw on laser disc, we saw an outstanding, but then-unknown actress named Mira Sorvino in Susan Seidelman's (of TV's "Sex and the City" and "Early Edition," "Streep's "She Devil," and Madonna's "Desperately Seeking Susan") "The Dutch Master."

Estimable names

Among the estimable names in the "Erotica" series were directors Bob Rafelson ("Five Easy Pieces"), Ken Russell ("Tommy," "Salome's Last Dance"), Nicolas Roeg ("Performance," "The Man Who Fell to Earth"), Paul Cox ("Cactus," "Kostas") and Iceland's Fridrik Thor Fridriksson.

Notable actors who took part in the series, aside from Sorvino, includ Arliss Howard, Theresa Russell, Vincent d'Onofrio and, would you believe, gay porn superstar Jeff Stryker, in his first legitimate role, in Rosa von Preinheim's "Can I Be Your Bratwurst, Please?," as a stranger from the west who arrives and becomes the fantasy of everyone in a Hollywood neighborhood.

What a stretch, huh?



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Pamper yourself this Christmas
(Warning: this is only for those who can truly afford it)

FACE TO FACE

Inday Badiday

YES, that's right! Pamper yourself this Christmas. Because of the huge crisis that hit us this year, it has become fashionable to help the poor, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, liberate the captives and all that—and a lot of people now feel guilty about indulging themselves. It seems to be a crime nowadays to dedicate your life to the pursuit of personal pleasures and luxuries.

Gifts

But then, do we still know how to celebrate Christmas? I don't mean putting up the tree and the *belen* and the wreath and the lights, or wrapping gifts for the *inaanaks* and friends and family, or whipping up all those special holiday dishes. Many people just mindlessly go through the motions of doing all that, erroneously thinking it will cheer them out of the pits they now find themselves in. What I have in mind is recapturing the spirit of the old-fashioned good time.

Yes, let's be normal, let's have a good time, let's indulge ourselves. After all, we can't possibly give what we don't have. If we don't have a genuinely good time this Christmas, how can we spread the holiday cheer to the less privileged? I remember when I was in grade school, the nun in my religious class exhorted us to "love your neighbor as you love yourself." I don't know about the rigidly Christian, but I take that to mean that I should love myself first, right?

Besides, I can't shake off what New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani told New Yorkers days after the Sept. 11 debacle: "Spend. Go shopping. Watch a play. Go back to your normal life."

Love yourself

Indeed, if you can afford it, there should be nothing wrong about going overboard with the business of loving yourself outrageously this holiday season. Forget your problems. Damn the crisis. Don't hold on to your money like you can use it in the afterlife. The place and time to pamper yourself is here and now.

Shop till you drop. And quit the game of being "practical" about the things you buy. That will most certainly rob you of the sheer joy that comes from throwing big money on the totally useless. And stop comparing the prices of different brands of similar items. Go for the most expensive.

While we're at it, think of that one thing you've always wanted to buy but felt guilty about for many Yuletides now. Throw guilt out of the window—go ahead and buy it! Like, you want a new Persian rug? Or another Lalique? Or that Ang Kiukok that is so small it defies logical explanation why it is so deliciously, devilishly expensive? Don't even think about it. Snap 'em up!

Next, eat. For once, discard your diet, forget your exercise, ignore your calorie and cholesterol count. Gorge on black forest, mango tart and sans rival. Drown yourself in an ocean of chocolates, Loosen your belt and fill yourself up with leche flan, crema de fruta, brazo de Mercedes and ice cream. And, yes, indulge in those sinfully delightful holiday treats—*lechon de leche, patatim, kare-kare, nilagang bulalo, rellenong alimango, pata de jamon, etc!*

Gustatory sensations

I mean, Christmas is definitely not the time to deprive yourself of the immensely gratifying gustatory sensations. Some people eat to live, others live to eat. Either way, you keep your digestive system busy. You might as well enjoy it!

Then, travel. I don't refer here to the kind of travelling that expands your horizons—although that's fine, if that's your trip. What I have in mind is something more, uh, decadent. Like, go to Plantation Bay just to read a book by the lagoon. Or to Boracay just to watch the sunset. Or to Coron just to pick up seashells by the seashore.

If you're the adventurous type, hie off to Moalboal for a little snorkeling and skindiving. Or to Mt. Maruyog for a little hiking and mountain-climbing. If you have a streak of danger in you, go by your lonesome and surrender yourself to the loving ministrations of strangers,.Indeed, sometimes, strangers are more caring than family!

Finally, refresh your body and feed your soul. Like, go to a spa and lavish yourself with the multitude of delights that it gives. I have just come from Spa Concept on the third floor of Traders Hotel, Manila and it was an exhilarating experience. It's as close to heaven as you can get on earth.

Shiatsu massage

This is the place to go if you want authentic shiatsu massage. After all, the people behind Spa Concept are the same people who brought this ancient Japanese, total–body relaxation technique to the Philippines way back in the mid-'70s. The masseuses are all professionals, trained by Japanese masters in the fine art and science of pleasure through finger pressure.

They also have aromatherapy, the age-old method of relieving stress and uplifting moods. It was a divine experience. I didn't know there was a specific mix of healing herbs, flowers and spices specially made for each unique personality and body chemistry. They can create a special blend just for you to address your individual problems.

Like, if you have a troublesome lovelife, or work-related stress, or are just plain tired and weary, they can whip up a special concoction just for you!

And the thing I loved most was their fusion massage—a combination of body scrub and Japanese oil massage. The exfoliation stimulates circulation and gives you a younger, healthier-looking skin, while the oil-based massage with sliding, circular strokes of the palm and fingers soothes and revitalizes the aching body.

They also have a full-service salon for men and women, a dry and steam sauna, and a jacuzzi to truly make the Spa Concept "a sanctuary of scents and touch, a haven for the senses, an oasis for the stressed."

Indeed, we all deserve a break during the Christmas break. Christmas is not only to make us happy. It is also to make us beautiful. Inside and out. So, let's rejuvenate ourselves as the very stressful 2001 comes to a close. We deserve it! And, let's face it, this is the only proper way for us to welcome 2002.

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SENNHEISER

'Amelie' sweeps European Film Awards

BERLIN—Jean-Pierre Jeunet's romantic Gallic comedy "Amelie" swept the European Film Awards on Saturday, winning the Best Film category and the Best Director award for the Frenchman.

Adventures

The inventive fantasy about the adventures of a young Paris waitress also won the prize for best cinematographer and Jeunet was voted best director in the People's Choice award.

The European Film Awards are presented by the European Film Academy and are aimed at boosting the profile of European cinema.

French actress Isabelle Huppert won Best Actress for her role as a piano teacher in Michael Haneke's dark voyeuristic tale of masochism and dependency, "The Piano Teacher."

Acceptance speech

"I've always loved being a European actress," Huppert said in her acceptance speech.

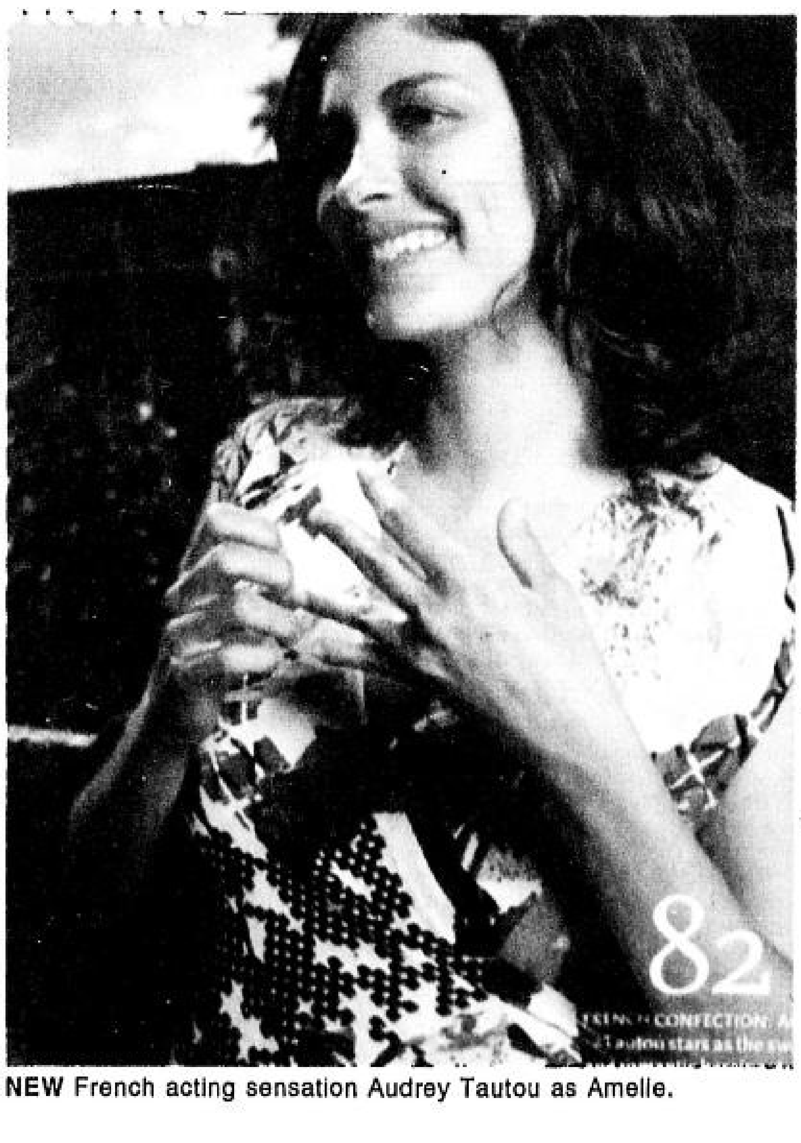
Ben Kingsley was given the Best Actor award for his role in the British gangster movie "Sexy Beast."

"Black Box BRD," a German film by Andreas Veiel about the 1989 murder of Deutsche Bank chief Alfred Herrhausen, won the Best Documentary award.

Cultural diversity

In a speech at the awards, German Culture Minister Julian Nida-Rumelin praised the cultural diversity of European cinemas, which he said deserved encouragement.

Among the 1,500 guests at the ceremony were the Italian filmmaker Nanni Moretti, British actor Ewan McGregor and the French director Patrice Chereau, whose film "Intimacy" won best film at the Berlin Film Festival this year. *Reuters*



NEW French acting sensation Audrey Tautou as Amelie.

Saturday SPECIAL

Theater's new breed shows promise, spunk–without attitude

BY RITO P. ASILO

PHILIPPINE theater churns out talented newcomers with great regularity. But amidst the passion and am bition that drive the gifted lot in the well-lit arena of the legitimate stage, quite a number of them don't get past first base because bad attitude gets in the way. Before they know it, they have already struck out.

Courage

Those who survive show not just talent and dedication, but also the courage to hurdle a lot of what makes people think twice about going into this career option—financial security, or the lack of it. But, is theater worth the risk?

Missy Maramara, Jenny Jamora and Lara de Jesus think so.

Missy thinks that theater hones one's survival skills because of the discipline it wields over actors. "When you throw yourself into a role, you need raw passion and a lot of energy to make the character real. But at the same time, you have to keep all that in check and not go beyond what is required. This is what makes theater so intense," she intones.

If the Ateneo University scholar sounds serious, it is because she has always depended on discipline to get through her full day's routine that starts at 4:15 a.m. when she has to run, literally, to attend soccer practice. In fact, Missy plays for her school's UAAP team, and has been invited to join the national team.

Yes, the unassuming 24-year-old is a full-time student, an athlete *and* a professional theater actress.

Passion

She would have said yes to the slot on the national team but her passion is really the theater. Sometimes, because she starts her day very early, she is already very tired when she gets to her final activities of the day—rehearsing and acting.

These days, Missy tours with New Voice Company's "The Vagina Monologues," in Filipino and English. She started as understudy to all three actresses (Pinky Marquez, Harlene Bautista and Arlene Borja) and had to memorize the whole script! To her director's surprise, she dropped script before any of the three did!

But her participation with the English TVM is an even more interesting story.

Three days before a November performance, Lara Fabregas had to be taken to the hospital and, naturally, couldn't do two shows that were scheduled that week. Missy got a call if she was willing to do Lara's monologues three days before the performance!

"I was so scared because I had to perform alongside Tami Monsod and Lynn Sherman, and had to learn all those lines," she recalls. What was even more daunting was the fact that she has not even read the English version!

Flexibility

She owes her flexibility to an impressive body of work, mostly classics and Shakespeare. She shifts from English to Tagalog with equal ease. Ever since Dulaang Sibol's Onofre Pagsanghan tapped her to play Lady Macbeth, she has never looked back.

She has since portrayed Shakespeare's Beatrice ("Much Ado About Nothing"), Olivia/Maria ("Twelfth Night," Jessica ("Merchant of Venice") and Ophelia ("Hamlet"). She also portrayed Marilu in Nick Joaquin's "Pinoy Agonistes," and Rosaura/Estrella in "La Vida Es Sueno."

She adores Shakespeare. "I am amazed by the layers that you get from his work," she says, then adds in jest, "I think he was my lover in a past life." Her frustration, though, is the part of Juliet in the Bard's tragic romance, "Romeo and Juliet."

This incredible love affair with the stage, however, didn't start with dark, brooding classics and comedies. She recalls, "I was five years old, in Kinder, when our teacher announced that we were going to stage 'Cinderella.' When she complimented me after the auditions, I started to tell my mom and everybody I knew that I was going to play the lead. To my mom's embarrassment, I ended up playing the wicked stepsister, Anastasia! So, back then, I already showed promise—and ambition!"

Missy also remembers playing the male lead, Claudio, in her high school's all-girl production of "Much Ado About Nothing." "Would you believe? Girls actually swooned over me," she laughs at the recollection.

This ability to laugh at herself is one quality that endears Missy to the people she works with. In fact, she grudgingly admits that she likes impersonating *jollogs*, the school *coños* and even friends.

THEATER'S/p.J2

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No 3786, Series of 2001

Theater's new breed shows promise, spunk–without attitude

(From page J1)

She admires actress Miren Alvarez ("She makes acting look easy. It's like a second skin to her."), and TA director Ricky Abad ("His ability to repackage classics amazes me!"), and hopes to have a full-time career as an actress after she graduates.

On the other hand, Jenny Jamora finished a BS Food Technology degree in UP Diliman at the top of her class (magna cum laude and valedictorian), then took her masters at Texas A&M University in the US, returned to the country, immediately found a job—and hated it! So, she quit, and started weighing her options.

Jenny has always fancied the idea of taking up acting, but most serious, career-oriented women never choose acting over other more stable career options. Choosing a life in the arts only seems logical to those who have the talent for it. And this pretty, soft-spoken looker definitely has it.

She took an acting workshop with New Voice, and was later invited to join the company. "I started toying with the idea of acting when Lea and Monique won the lead in 'Miss Saigon.' There was a lot of fanfare surrounding it, and they started showing documentaries about the making of the musical. I was fascinated by what I saw! I told myself I wanted to do *that*," she recalls.

In the short span of time, Jenny has stacked up an impressive body of work: she played the lead in Jean Annoiulh translation of Sophocles' "Antigone;" Madame de Simiane in "Madame de Sade;" Tere in Musicat's "firewaterwoman;" performed the "Vagina Workshop" monologue in "Purple Rose;" even sang and recited political poetry in the recent "Revolutionary Hearts." She did showcase productions of Susan Sinoman's "Fitting Rooms' and Jeanette Winterson's "Written in the Body."

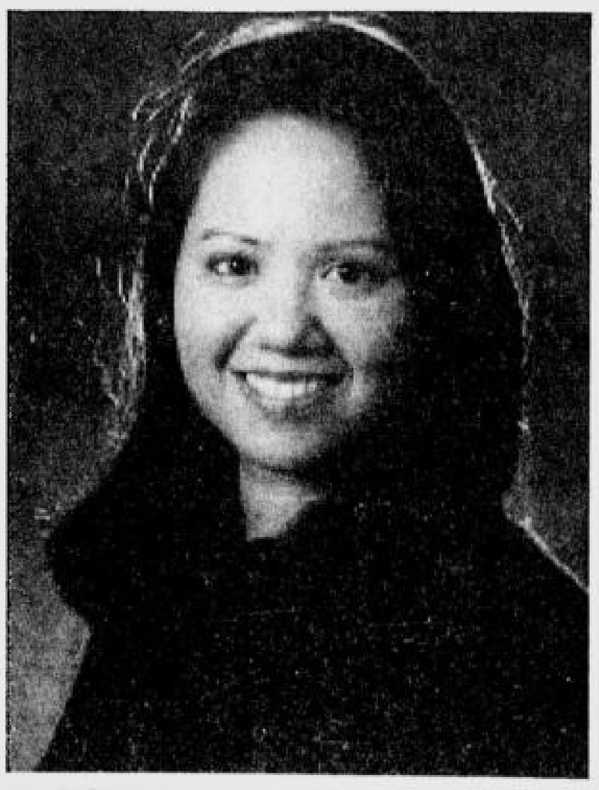
Summer program

She was offered roles in Shakespearean plays but she was scared to do Shakespeare without preparing for it. Jenny felt she needed to train formally so she flew to New York to audition for a slot in the summer program of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, and got in.

When has this fascination with the stage started for her?

She remembers watching Kathleen Turner play Maggie in Tennessee Williams' study on mendacity, "Cat On A Hot Tin Roof," opposite Charles Durning. (The movie version starred Elizabeth Taylor and Paul Newman.) In her senior year in high school, she performed Maggie and found the experience fulfilling.

JAMORA. More at ease in straight plays.


DE JESUS. Staggering rehearsal schedule.

"I thought I got the accent right," she laughingly recalls, the irony of finding accents superficial not lost on her.

Her passion for acting was further fanned when she lost herself watching straight plays and musicals on Broadway and off: Chekhov's "The Seagull," starring Meryll Streep and Kevin Kline under Mike Nichols' direction; David Auburn's Pulitzer-winning drama, "Proof" (Lea Salonga will do it here in the Philippines); Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure," starring Billy Crudup; Kenneth Lonergan's "Lobby Hero;" Mel Brooks' "The Producers," starring Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick; Susan Stroman's dance play, "Contact;" Stroman's "Urinetown," etc.

Rush

Turning serious, she says, "I think I found a part of what my calling is—because a career plays a part of that. I love the rush that it gives me. The rehearsal process is grueling and insane, you beat yourself up over how close you are to the character, and everything that goes with it. *Walang* 'I love you because....' It's just 'I love you, period.'"

Part of the fun of having a conversation with Jenny is when she gets into her "analytical mode," and articulates her thoughts the way she feels them, then asks you afterwards if she was being clear, and *then* laughs at her thoroughness. She even tells you what her fears are.

She can carry a tune. We recently saw her performance in a cantata where she did a mean solo number, but when we discussed it with her, she said it was "a miracle" and "I haven't found the voice that I'm comfortable with."

Even with her acting, she's a bit hard on herself, though people from NVC disagree. She explains, "I have not gotten roles that are far removed from me, although, emotion-wise, I no longer feel hindered."

She may have been scared to do Shakespeare, but after her New York experience where she performed Rhonda Louise's character in John Patrick Shanley's "Women of Manhattan," she's only too happy to finally do one for AAI—that of Celia's in "As You Like It."

Different purposes

Jenny says she's more at ease in straight plays. " Musicals and straight plays serve different purposes. Musicals are entertaining and inspiring and require singers to have a more heightened emotion, but you can hide behind the song. Straight plays, on the other hand, mirrors reality more. I'm not saying that one is better than the other, they're just different."

Like the different genres of plays, she has her own definition of an ideal director: "A good director should have respect for the text and the author's intention. While keeping a very strong vision of the play, he should be someone who can elicit organic performances and still be collaborative with his actors."

She says she hates playtime onstage. She complains, "It's unfair to the audience and to your fellow actors. It's an awful tradition."

She then went on to tell us about an embarrassing thing that happened to her while doing "The Princess Bride," where she played the lead: "I was wearing ballet shoes in a scene where my lover was about to get killed. I ran to him, and before I knew it, I was on the floor! All my co-actor did was say, 'What are you doing on the floor?' He didn't even help me."

Guilty pleasures

Despite Jenny's serious attitude towards work, she admits she enjoys some guilty pleasures in life. Her eyes light up, and she blurts out, "Dawson's Creek!" The show's premise is every girl's ideal relationship with two guys—best friends who become romantic lovers but can't deal with the situation! Their way of having 15-year-olds spill out philosophical inanities is a very addictive concept. And it doesn't hurt that James Van Der Beek is a cutie!"

Sharing Jenny's enthusiasm for theater, Lara de Jesus juggles a 9-to-5 media-related job and a staggering rehearsal schedule for New Voice shows.

An Interdisciplinary Studies graduate from the Ateneo, with prominent parents in media and the academe, Lara is pursuing a similar path, with an alternative career twist—she acts on the side.

She was mesmerized by theater when, as a young girl, she saw her cousin perform in a Repertory Philippines production. She relates: "My parents brought me to a lot of plays and I was simply in awe of the performers. I thought to myself, 'Wow!' I think I can do that, too!" But she had to overcome a painfully shy exterior first. She recalls, "I was so scared I was going to suck!"

Workshops

She auditioned for "Angels in America" "just for the heck of it," and decided to take acting workshops soon after. She was disappointed to hear her classmates getting calls for an invitation to join NVC's roster of actors, but eventually got the long-awaited call four months after the workshop.

On and off, she dabbled in theater. She has performed the role of Emily in Wilder's "Our Town;" the lovable human pet in David Wood's "Save the Human;" alternated in the role of Mrs. Kidd in Churchill's "Top Girls;" and Paulita Gomez in Dulaang UP's "Fili II." She was seen also in "I Want to Make Magic," "Wind in the Willows," "Revolutionary Hearts," and "Mga Awit ng Kalayaan at Pag-ibig."

The "Top Girls" experience was particularly challenging because she was understudy to six characters, and had to practically memorize the whole script! "It was an intimidating experience, working with the likes of Monique Wilson, Lourdes Faberes, Dulce Aristorenas, Roslyn Perez, Patrice Pacis and other great actresses. And the director, Anna Valdez-Lim, was brilliant! I was trying to soak up as much as I could," she beams.

Her initial foray into theater was in a grade school production of "Hansel and Gretel," where she played Gretel and had a blast doing it. But the high school she attended didn't have theater, so she didn't do anything until she did "Our Town."

Supportive

She shares, "I was so shy that my parents were surprised—but supportive—when they learned that I had asked my sister to enroll me in a workshop. They were even more surprised when I started doing professional theater productions."

Would she do theater full-time? She answers: "I don't know how realistic that is. As much as I'd like to, I doubt the viability. But I'd like acting to always be part of what I do."

Much as she'd like to do musicals, she says, "My comfort level is higher in straight plays, like 'Antigone.' In musicals, you have to constantly listen to yourself if you're in tune or not, so the fear factor is higher."

More than the fulfillment that she gets from performing in plays, she admits that the thrill is also in the things that happen during the run that you don't have any control over.

She laughs and shares, "There were scenes that I didn't come out for when I should have. And backstage, I was wondering why I felt I had extra time to linger when I usually didn't! Part of the novelty of "Save the Human" was that we mimed some sets. So, I was part of a TV set.

Five minutes

"In one scene, they had to wait for five minutes because the next person's cue was my coming out from offstage to complete the TV set. I just realized what I missed when Monique (Wilson, the director) asked, 'Where's the TV?'"

Speaking of TV, Lara shares that she is such a sucker for Channel E. She admits, "I watch anything on E—from "True Stories" to Steve Kmetko's All-American smile."

On the lighter side, Lara shares that among actors she adores, John Cusack ("Say Anything," "High Fidelity," "America's Sweethearts") tops her list. She swoons, "I love him. I love him. I love him!" And we didn't have any choice but to believe her.

If there is another actor we've seen both Lara de Jesus and Jenny Jamora swoon over, it's Harry Potter's Oliver Woods, Gryffindor's Quidditch team captain, portrayed by Scottish actor Sean Biggerstaff (last seen in Emma Thomson's "The Winter Guest"). But, ladies, he is only 18!

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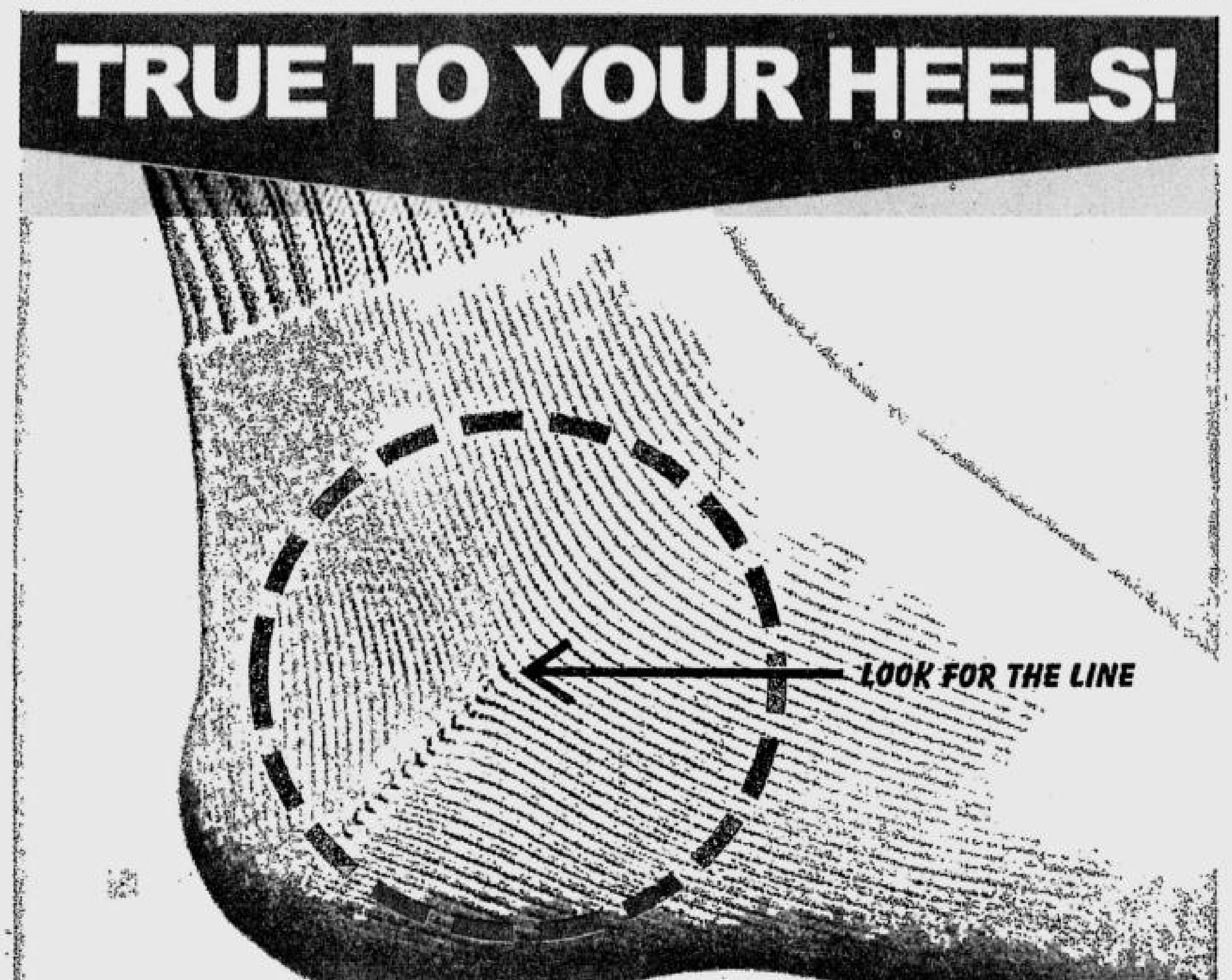

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The warmth and spirit of Christmas, then and now

By Behn Cervantes

AS Christmas approaches, the excitement mounts. Stores outdo each other in colorful décor. Christmas carols both local and those that insist we still dream of a White Christmas or wait for Santa and his reindeer are heard everywhere on the radio and television. Itinerant *cumbancheros* and streets urchins sing about a "Silen Nye, oly nye, oli impan so tener en bry."

Warmth

I still love the spirit of Christmas, the warmth of family as well as the thrill of spreading joy to the world. However, I've realized that Santa Claus and Christmas have changed for me over the years.

Christmas has become too materialistic. Even jolly Santa has become synonymous with expense and materialism. It wasn't always like this—or was it? I decided to ask a few friends in the world of entertainment and find out if they too felt differently about Christmas from those years when we sang "Dashing Through the Snow," or dreamt of that "White Christmas" merriment and great abandon.

I called **Barbara Perez**, Famas awardee, mother and now grandmother of two. Q&A:

Who is Santa Claus to you now?

God. He is love. And he does give us what we need.

Who was Santa Claus then?

Santa then was the only who could give me whatever I wanted. What did I want? I wanted a lace fan!

Favorite Christmas carol when you were a child?

"Silent Night." It has always been my favorite carol because it is peaceful, like Christmas in a manger.

What is your Christmas wish?

That life would be like a fairy tale. There would be no crime, no corruption. Evil men would get punished and everywhere good would reign. That is my Christmas wish.

Majority

How about **Cynthia Patag**, the singer *cum* comic star who is also a dedicated activist, more conscious now of what the majority lacks, rather what she wants to have.

Who is Santa Claus?

He is more spiritual opposed to the material image he now suggests to most people in those malls, shopping, shopping—and shopping.

Who was Santa Claus to you then?

"*Sus*, Santa was the traditional colonial image of the fat, white, bearded guy with the sleigh and reindeer laughing ho, ho, ho. I can no longer laugh so gaily seeing the miserable state of our country and how many of our people suffer because of and despite Christmas.

"Favorite Christmas film? I liked "Scrooge," although that came more recently.

"My favorite Christmas carol is Ryan Cayabyab's "Kumukutikutitap" because it suggests beauty is in the little things that brighten up our world. Besides, it's Filipino, *di ba*? Not Christmas but *Pasko*!

"My Christmas wish is that we finally have truth and justice for everyone in this country of ours!"

Erstwhile comedienne

How about **Bibeth Orteza**, the prize-winning scriptwriter, mother of two and erstwhile comedienne?

"Santa Claus is the one who shares everything with everyone without locking anybody out.

"Santa Claus then? We were poor so we had no Christmas tree. Little time given to Santa and the like. It was more spiritual. Now, Santa Claus is Papa and Mama.

"There is no favorite Christmas movie either, but I recall one Christmas when there was enough money so we took the younger siblings to see 'Sound of Music.' They were completely enthralled by it, thus endowing the film with a true Yuletide joy.

"My favorite carol is a Protestant hymn, 'There's a Song In My Heart.' I love the meaningful lyrics. My Christmas wish is that all achieve happiness. That there truly is peace on earth for men of goodwill."

More spiritual

For award-winning director **Laurice Guillen,** Christmas too is more spiritual. "I grew up in Butuan and that place was not resplendent with lights and the like. In fact, Christmas was the time for typhoons and heavy rains. However, I started out with all the traditional notions of Santa Claus. I was greedy. I did not put out my socks, I put out a big pillowcase! In the morning it was indeed full of goodies.

"Now, Santa Claus is me, my husband (Johnny Delgado). The parents are Santa. The spirit of Christmas is to bring cheer. Christmas is a time for joy, to celebrate the spirit of love that came with the birth of Jesus. I think that means we must consciously bring cheer to all.

"If conditions are stressful we should try to laugh them off and instead work to achieve good cheer so that we affect those around us with the spirit of goodwill.

"I don't have a favorite Christmas film but when we were kids in Butuan we would see whatever film was showing during the holidays. Usually, these were Sampaguita films that were based on serialized stories in "Hiwaga" and "Sampaguita." However, "Gift of the

THESPIRIT/p.J3

PEREZ. Famas awardee.

PATAG. Dedicated activist.

Jennifer Connelly fulfills her promise

By Nestor U. Torre

A LONG time ago, Elvira Manahan and I were in Italy for an autumn interlude that took us from Rome to Florence to Venice, with side trips through the Vatican, Positano, San Giminiano and Assisi thrown in for good measure.

Idyllic time

It was an idyllic time made even more eventful by Elvira's penchant for transforming even the most humdrum day into an exciting adventure.

She didn't really plan it that way, it just happened. Anywhere in the world, her exotic looks and madcap verve attracted people to her, and made them want to get to know her better.

For instance, one day on a train from Florence to Venice, we shared a compartment with a distinguished-looking man who introduced himself to us as a film producer. Our ears perked up.

In fact, he said, he was going to Venice to oversee the production of an Italian film that he hoped would also be shown in other European countries, and perhaps even in the United States. Would we do him the honor of spending a day on the film's set in Venice?

Would we?! Ofcourse, being film buffs from the word go, Elvira and I responded in the affirmative—with alacrity.

Ingenue lead

The next day, after doing the standard tourist rounds, we were driven to the movie's set and introduced to a 14-year-old American actress, Jennifer Connelly, who was playing the Italian movie's ingenue lead. Elvira was very taken with the beautiful young talent, who looked like she could have been Brooke Shield's clone.

But Jennifer quickly showed that she was quite her own person, thank you very much. She had none of the flightiness that Brooke occasionally exhibited when she was in her early teens, and made it clear that she wasn't about to make a career out of playing the roles that Brooke had rejected.

After our day with her on that film set in Venice, Elvira and I agreed that Jennifer Connelly was in international films to stay.

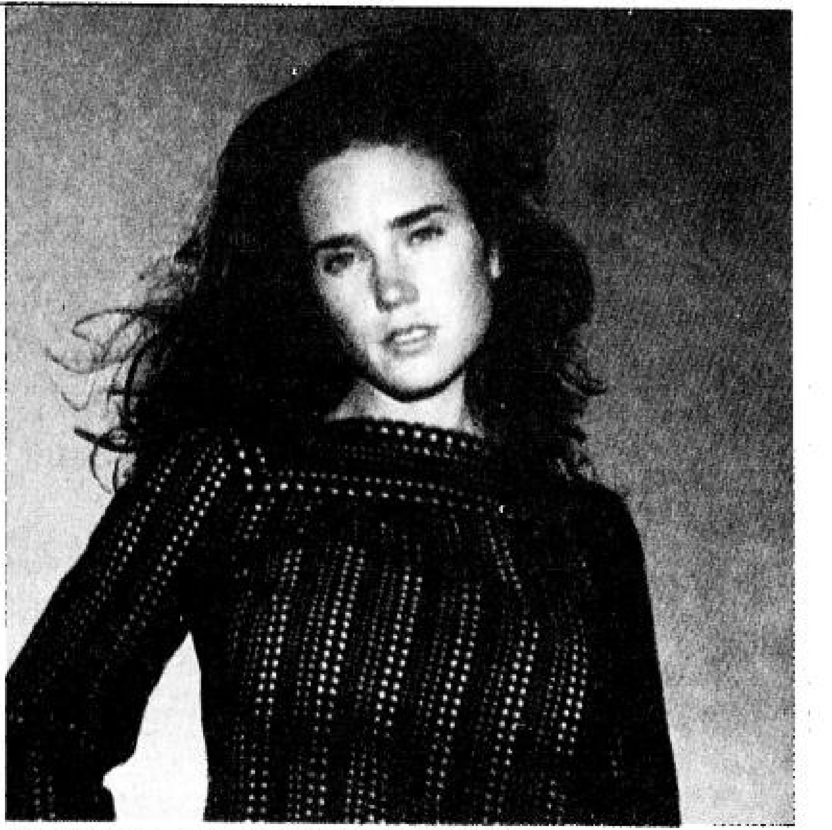
Flashforward to 20001. Elvira is no longer with us, but Jennifer is still acting in one film after another. She's never really made it to the rarefied heights that the likes of Julia Roberts and Angelina Jolie inhabit, but she's developed quite a reputation as an excellent, versatile star of independent films, like Anjelica Huston a decade ago. Now, that definitely isn't a bad rep to have!

Recent projects

Jennifer's recent projects include Darren Aronofsky's "Requiem for a Dream" and Ron Howard's "A Beautiful Mind." In the first film, she jolted viewers with her uncompromisingly messy portrayal of a drug addict.

On the other hand, in "A Beautiful Mind," her character is the one who's trying to keep her husband (Russel Crowe) get over his scary case of schizophrenia.

Directors don't hesitate to assign Jennifer such emotionally demanding roles because she's proven in her past characterizations that she can do justice to the most complex roles.



CONNELLY. Emotionally demanding roles.

ROMERO. A wish for world peace.

The warmth and spirit of Christmas . . .

(From page J2)

Magi" and "A Christmas Carol" always came to mind, and to this day they do embody the meaning and spirit of Christmas for me."

No Christmas glitz

How about **Dulce**, that wonderful singer from Cebu who quickly informs you that her parents came from the boondocks of the province? "Christmas was different there. There were no decorations and Christmas glitz."

Who is Santa Claus to her? "Santa is the Giver of Gifts. He is the Lord who gives color and hope to Christmas." When she was young, there was hardly any consciousness of Santa Claus, the bringer of gifts. Her parents didn't really know about him. These days, she no longer emphasizes his Christmas presence to her 3-year-old because Santa can also be the source of false hopes for many of the poor people in our country.

After all, Dulce recalls, "As a child I put up my stockings with great expectations. Since my parents did not know about Santa and could not afford to give me gifts, I was frustrated when I found an empty stocking the next morning."

Her favorite carols were those sung by Cebuano *pastores* who went around town singing local ditties with a native harp.

"I have no favorite Christmas film but as a young girl I identified with the Amalia-Liezl film, "Poor Little Rich Girl" because of the glitter. Glitter to me was synonymous with Christmas. In fact, as a child when my father would bring home some glitters from the factory, I would quickly decorate a makeshift tree with it. What do I now wish? I wish selflessness in the world!

"And, what do I want for myself? OK *na ako*—with life and with the Lord. Thank you!"

Luminous

La **Gloria Romero**, a queen of Philippine movies and as luminous as the Christmas star, giggles when she recounts that, as a child, she believed that Santa was for real. "Now, Santa is the giver of so many miracles although my grandson (9-year-old son of daughter Maritess Gutierrez, erstwhile actress now chef) truly believes there is that jolly Santa Claus who gives him those gifts."

Wish for the world? "*Katahimikan.* Everywhere, there is killing. Newspapers report wars, cruelty around the world. Wouldn't it be nice to have peace on earth?" Her favorite Christmas carol is "'Silent Night' *pa rin.* I love its lyrics. They are so peaceful, almost childlike, *di ba.*

"My favorite Christmas films are "For Mama With Love," which I did many years ago with Luis (Gonzales) and the kids. There was that poignant Christmas scene in "Sakada," too, remember? I loved that movie."

What then are her personal wishes for Christmas? "Since things are so expensive now, I just wish for good health. I wish *sana si* Juancho *magtayo-tayo na rin.* Also, that the Philippine movie industry would be alive and well again—good health in the movies, too. *Isang* wish *man lang ma*-fulfill, OK *na.* I wish everyone good health because with that gift everyone would be happy, *di ba?*"

Yes, indeed Christmas has changed for these show biz friends, but the essence of love, sharing and the giving of joy to the world that is at the heart of the Yuletide spirit remains the same. So Christmas will be as merry as ever but more meaningful, too. May it also be a just, happy and more spiritual New Year for all. Ho, ho, ho!

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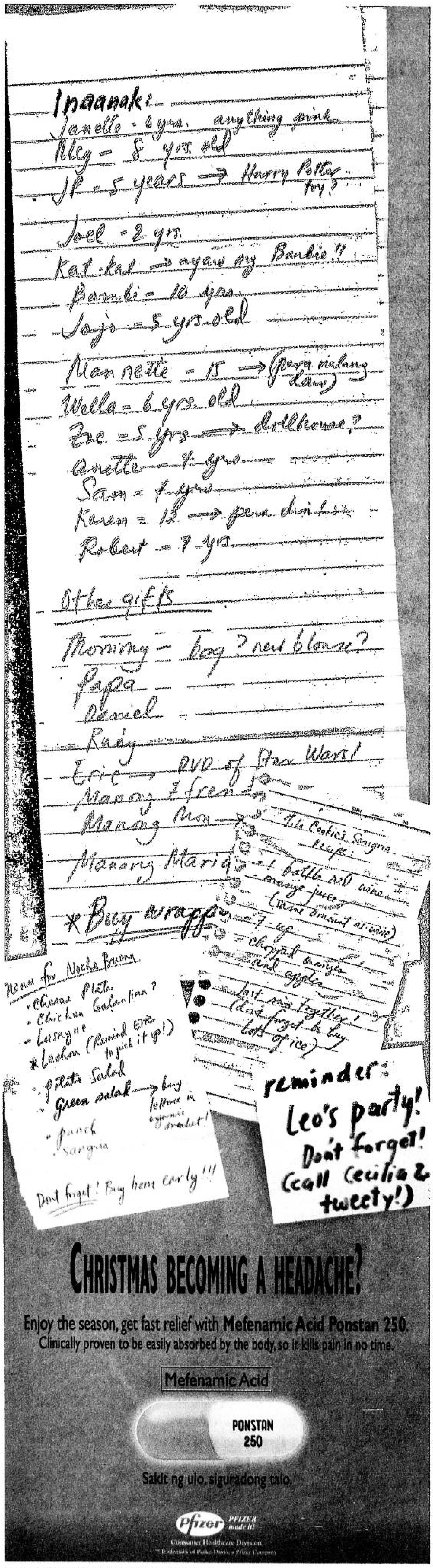
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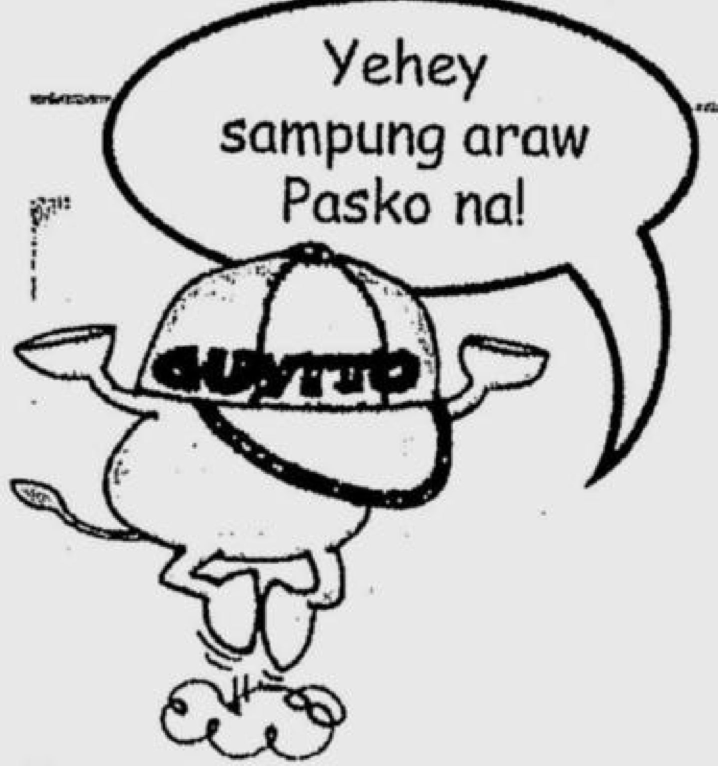
Yehey sampung araw Pasko na!
GUYITO

Junior INQUIRER

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2001 ◆ 12 PAGES ◆ VOLUME 5, NUMBER 62

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- ● **Story: A Carbon Atom's Tale** Page 6
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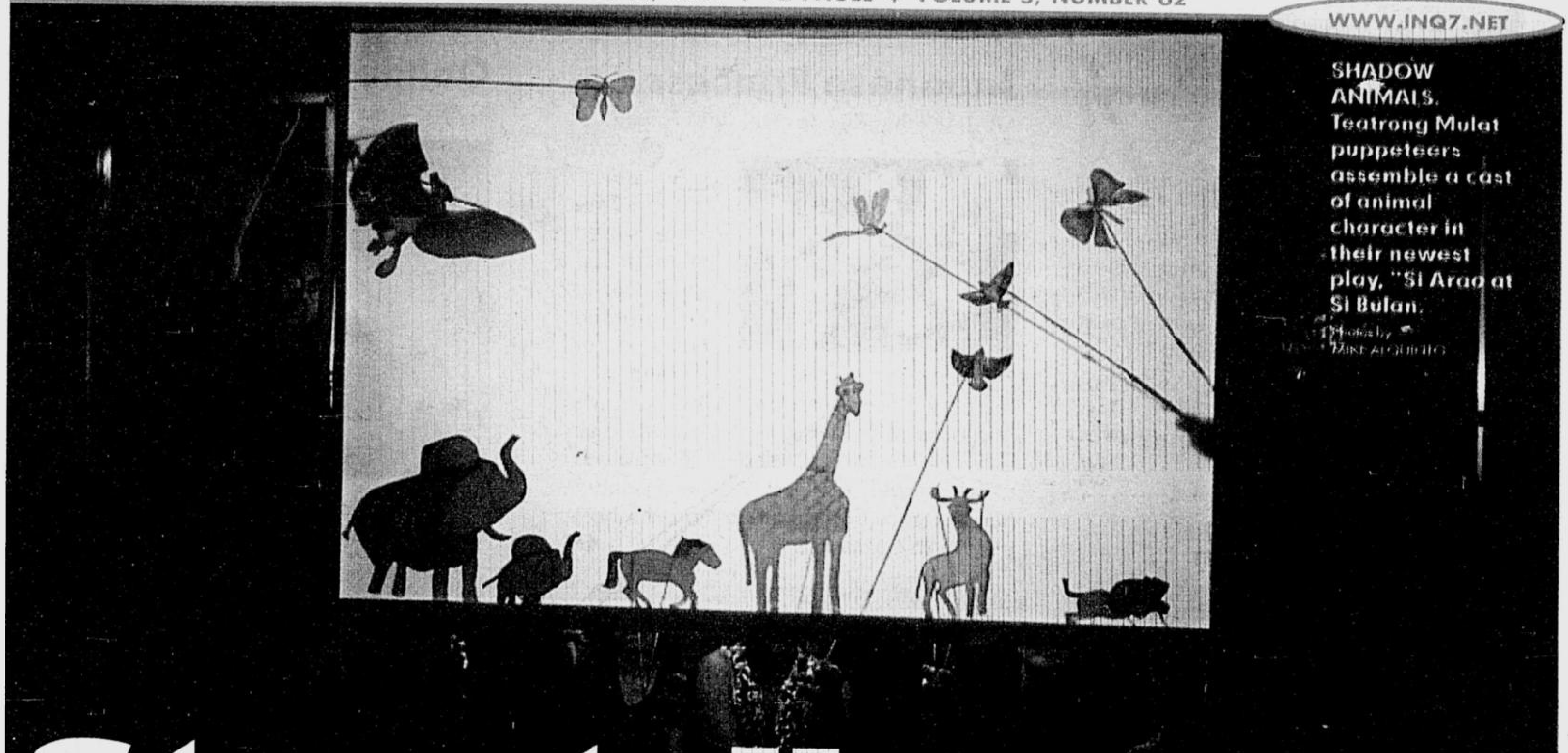


SHADOW ANIMALS. Teatrong Mulat puppeteers assemble a cast of animal character in their newest play, "Si Arao at Si Bulan.

Photos by MIKE ALQUINTO

Storytellers and Colored Shadows

Teatrong Mulat's newest shadow puppet play features a major brother and sister quarrel as well a myriad of gossamer characters and animals

BOINGGG! A wee child bangs the gong four times to signal the beginning of the story. A red elephant, a pink turtle and an orange giraffe appear one by one on a lighted screen. Then a pair of shadow puppets argue at the edge of the screen. Dressed in yellow is Arao and dressed in blue is his sister Bulan. They are Bathala's children and they are fighting over the stones their father gave to them as gifts.

This is just a sample of the magical scenes in Teatrong Mulat's newest shadow puppet play, "Si Arao at Si Bulan" or "Brother Sun and Sister Moon, " an enchanting tale about the origin of the sun and the moon and why they never travel together in the sky.

ACTING WITH LOLA. Three-year-old Aina Bonifacio Ramolete admires the set with her grandmother, Amelia La Peña-Bonifacio, founder of Teatrong Mulat. Aina has a bit part in her *lola*'s play, too.

A Zoo of Puppets

It took award-winning playwright and Teatrong Mulat founder Amelia La Peña-Bonifacio and her troop two and a half months to finish the myriad of characters and creatures need to tell the story of Arao and Bulan. The proud result was a total of 28 puppets vibrantly hand-painted on plastic sheets.

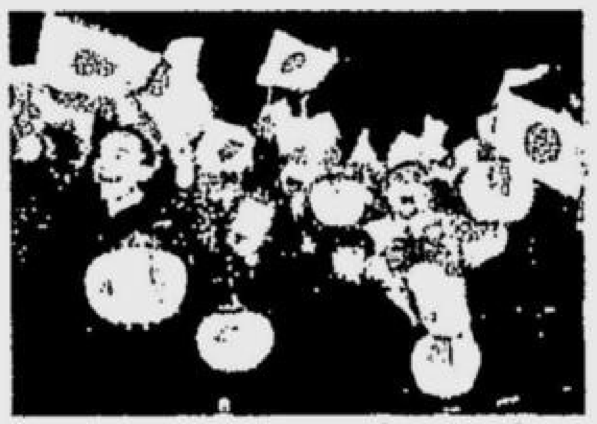
Storytellers/p.11

WORLD SCOPE

Euro Countdown

A BANK employee shows a 50 Euro note. On Dec. 1 shop-owners were offered Euro coin starter kits of 250 Euro and Euro notes of 5, 10 and 20 Euro. Starting Jan. 1 next year, the following 12 countries in Europe will use this currency: Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal and Finland. ***AP***

Japanese Princess



A JAPANESE boy joins well-wishers shouting *banzai*, or "long life," and waving lanterns and Japanese national flags in the Imperial Palace outer garden. The Japanese are celebrating the long-awaited birth of Crown Prince Naruhito and Crown Princess Masako's first baby. More than 20,000 people thronged to the garden on Dec. 2, one day after Masako gave birth to a baby girl at a hospital in the palace. ***AP***

Online Music

FEAST your eyes on this Diamond Rio portable MP3 player. The tiny device can store and play dozens of music files from the Internet. US music companies are getting ready to start selling songs through the Internet in a few weeks and the Diamond Rio is just one of the many gadgets being offered to Web-savvy music lovers. ***AP***

Brussels, Belgium
Tokyo, Japan
San Francisco, USA
New York, USA
Crystal River, USA
Liverpool, England

Goodbye, George...

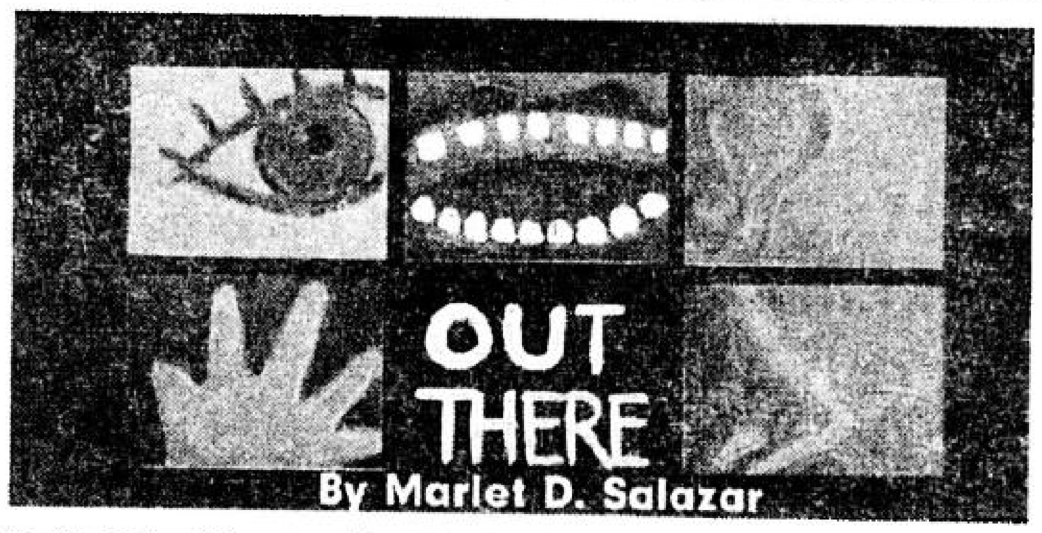
THE STREET sign for Penny Lane is laid with lilies in memory of former Beatle George Harrison. Harrison died in Los Angeles Nov. 29 after a long battle against cancer. Harrison was born in Liverpool in 1943. Penny Lane is the name of one of the Beatles biggest hits. ***AP***

Follow me!

WHOOPING cranes follow ultralight aircraft pilot and Operation Migration co-founder Joe Duff over Florida. The cranes were being flown to an undisclosed landing site in the Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge. This is the first flock of young whooping cranes to be led on a migration by ultralight aircraft. ***AP***

Super Scooter

AMERICAN inventor Dean Kamen leans to make a turn as he demonstrates his Segway Human Transporter, a one-person, battery-powered scooter. The device, which travels at a top speed of about 20 kilometers per hour, uses gyroscopes to keep it upright and guess where the rider wants to go. Kamen invented the transporter so less people would ride cars and to lessen air pollution. ***AP***

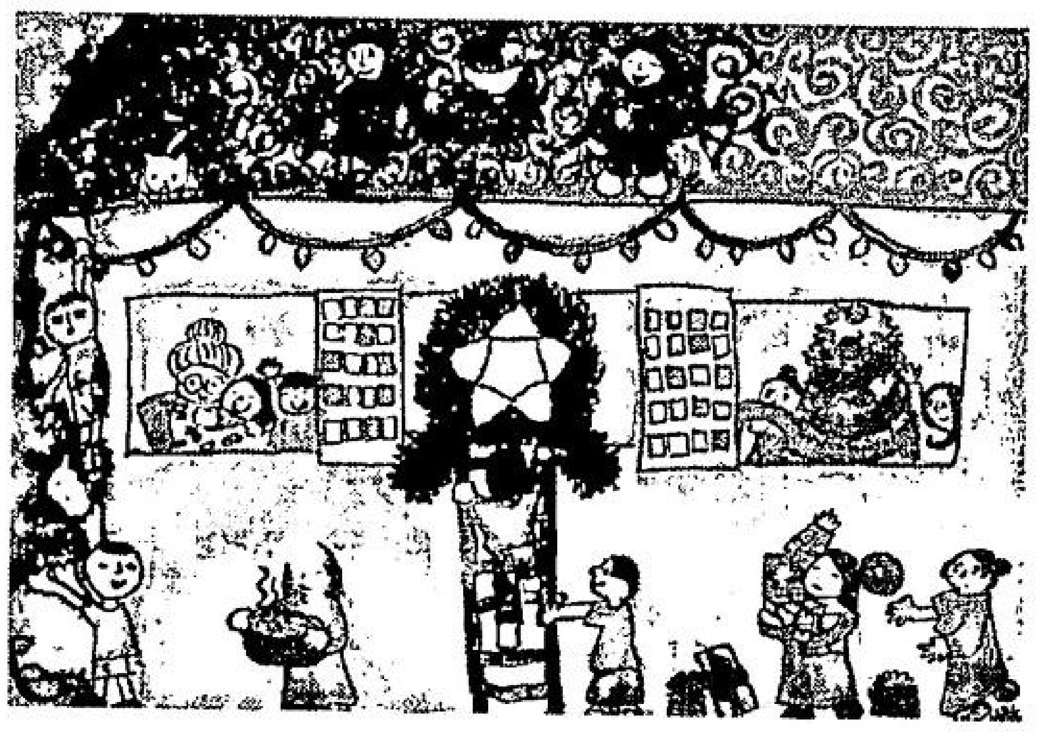


By Marlet D. Salazar

Got something for Out There? Send us the info two weeks in advance. Our fax numbers are 897-4793 up to 94. Don't forget to include your contact numbers and addresses.

Stuff

FREE E-POSTCARDS. Get free e-postcards created by budding artists Natasha and Valerie Luistro from St. Theresa's College. Send an e-mail to endo@philonline.com or call 416-9051 and 414-1954. The postcards are produced by the Kids at Art Summer Workshop.



COKE, HARRY POTTER AND READING. For every Coke that you drink, one point is credited to a public school library. A total of 250 points provides that library with one book. Ten lucky public libraries have been chosen as beneficiaries by the Department of Education. And to make this promotion even better, you can win prizes for every Coca-Cola purchase you make such as notebooks, bookmarks, stickers, Harry Potter backpacks and P20 discounts on Harry Potter movie tickets. So get out there and buy a Coke, win a prize and help a public school build its library!

Activities

DISNEY ON ICE. It's back! The yearly serving of Disney on Ice begins on Dec. 22 with loads of your favorite Disney characters. Watch Mickey, Minnie, Pinocchio, Buzz Lightyear, Woddy and characters from "Mulan," "A Bug's Life," and "The Lion King" will delight you with breathtaking skating production numbers at the Araneta Coliseum. Tickets are available at all SM Ticketnet outlets.

Museum Moments

STORYTELLING HOUR. Revel in the Christmas spirit of the holiday season with these featured storytellers: Dec. 14, Ms Marissa Bagunas, a school directress in Bacoor, Cavite, and Dec. 15, Marilyn Gutierrez, a full-time volunteer for All Together for Dignity Fourth World as they tell you wonderful stories in PBBY's Storytelling Hour every Friday at 10 a.m. on Museo Pambata, Roxas Blvd. Corner South Drive, Manila. For inquiries call up 523-1797.

Cable Picks

SANTA FORGETS? There's a privileged boy who has plenty of toys, but still wants a whole lot more. When his mom says no, he decides to write Santa a note, demanding more gifts. Would he get what he wants? Tune in to Cartoon Network for "Town That Santa Forgot" tonight at 6:30 p.m.

DOGS WITH JOBS. Akita dogs are well-loved animals in Japan. But Kiyoshi, an Akita, have been spreading his love to patients and families in a local hospital where he "works." While in one school, Kiyoshi listens to kids who have problems reading. His attention builds confidence to kids and adults alike. Catch him and other working dogs on National Geographic Channel's "Dogs with Jobs" on Dec. 20 at 9 p.m.

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CAMPUS
NEWS

Any news from YOUR SCHOOL?

Young campus journalists can fax their typewritten articles to JI at 897-4793 up to 94. Include your name, school and contact number and be sure to write ATTENTION: JUNIOR INQUIRER on top of your article. See YOUR news articles on the Junior Inquirer!

My NAMCYA Day 2 – The Finals!

By Marielle S. Dela Cruz
University of the Philippines Integrated School

CAUGHT my article the other week? Well, if you liked it then, you'll surely love this one! I'm going to tell you all about the National Music Competitions for Young Artists children's choir finals. I'll say this: the competition really was very tight.

When my dad and I got to the Cultural Center of the Philippines on Dec. 1, it was jampacked. There were so many people milling around the hall and so many different groups in various costumes.

There were 13 choirs in all and each one had around 15minutes to sing four songs. Each choir had to sing "Kawayan," "Dalawang Salawikaing Filipino," "Ampheu Selo He-o!" and a song of their choice from their region.

Choirs from all over

Check out the list of competing choirs and see if your favorite is there: Mariano Marcos State University Laboratory Elementary School Children's Choir, Region 1; Lal-Lo North District Children's Choir, Region 2; Flora District Children's Choir, Cordillera Administrative Region; Angat Elementary School Choir, Region 3; Sta.Teresa College Children's Choir, Region 4; Naga Central School Choir, Region 5; Trinity Christian School Choir, Region 6; Loboc Central Elementary School Choir, Region 7; Sto. Niño SPED Center Angelic Choir, Region 8; Miputak East Central School Choir, Region 9; Gintong Himig Children's Choir, Region 11; Starbeam Choir, Region 12; and De La Salle Santiago Zobel Grade School Choir, National Capital Region.

Happy and Nervous

I used the intermission time to go out and interview some kids and the conductors themselves to ask them how it felt to be joining an important contest such as this. Turns out all of them said nearly the same thing: happy and nervous and excited.

"I am happy, excited," said Trisha Macas of the Starbeam choir. "It's not every year you get to go to a contest like this."

"This is a rare privilege for us!" said Regine Go from Region 1.

"I feel challenged because the NAMCYA is the most prestigious choral competition in the Philippines," said Melvin Corpin, conductor of the Sto. Niño SPED Center Angelic Choir,

Rochelle R. Zamora, conductor of the Angat Children's choir, said she felt honored to be able to bring her choir to the finals because "the judges are very intelligent, credible people."

The winners

Everyone wanted very much to win. So when the time to announce the winners came, everyone was nervous, excited and fidgety in their seats. And so, the winners were the following.

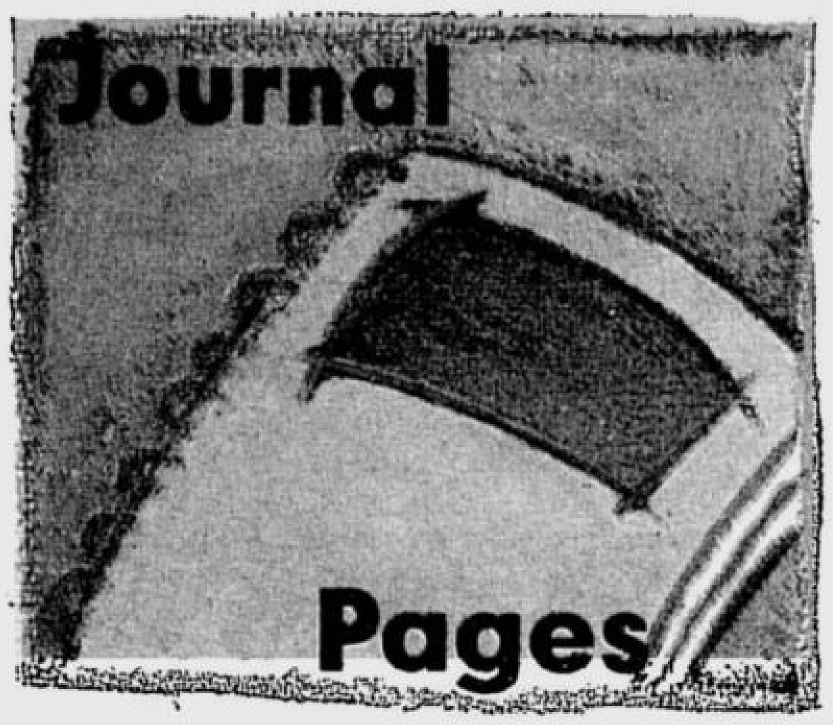
The Flora District Children's Choir received 3rd honorable mention. The 2nd honorable mention award went to the Gintong Himig Children's Choir. The first honorable mention was snagged by the Angat Elementary School Choir.

Third place went to the Lal-lo North District Children's Choir. De La Salle Zobel snagged the 2nd place and the Loboc Central Elementary School Choir bagged 1st place!

The choirs were judged by Dr. Ramon Santos, National Artist for Music Prof. Andrea Veneracion, Dr.Verne dela Peña, Prof. Ricardo Mazo and Prof. Malou Hermo. It must have been really difficult for them to decide on the winners, but I know they are really pleased with the results.

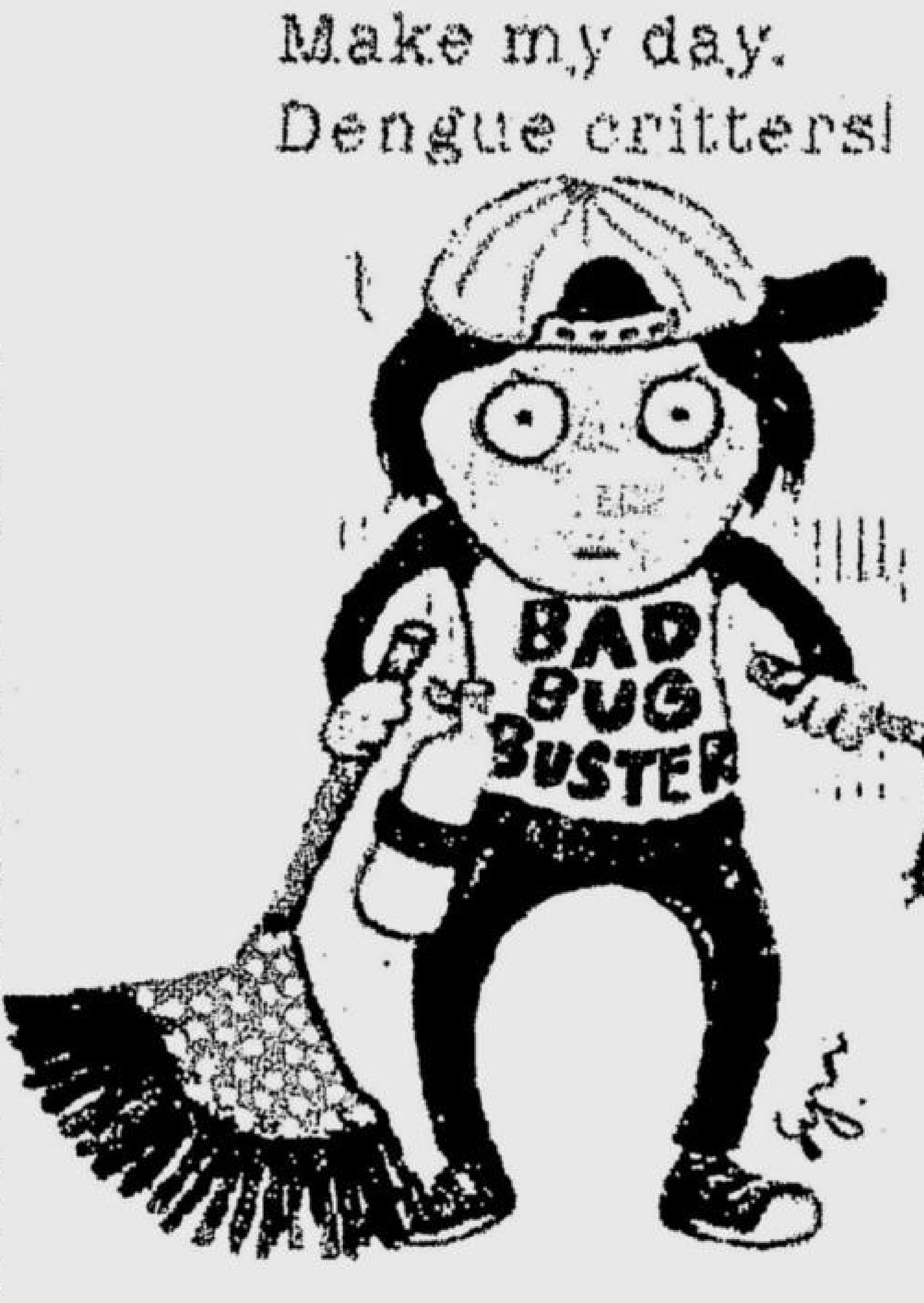
As for me, I felt very happy, and tired as well (from all the running around). I'm glad that somehow I got this chance to see a musical competition as great as this one.

To all the participants, you did your best and you sure were good! Congratulations to the winning choir and hope next year you'll be as good as ever. And what about your choir? Think you've got what it takes to win in the NAMCYA?



When I Had Dengue

BY MARIAN REYES
ASSUMPTION COLLEGE
MAKATI CITY


Make my day.
Dengue critters!
BAD BUG BUSTER

I WOULD like to share with you an experience I'll never forget! On July my brother JV, *Yaya* Anna and I got dengue fever. Some people think it's just any ordinary fever but it's not! Here is what happened.

We went to Cebu on a Friday and we had fun. But later that night I had a fever. I didn't feel well at all. I stayed in the hotel room to rest. The next day my brother called from Manila and said he didn't feel well too. *Yaya* Anna didn't feel well either. When we got back from Cebu, all three of us were down with fever. That was Sunday.

We went to the doctor but they found nothing. By Tuesday night my brother couldn't take it anymore. My family rushed him to Cardinal Santos Medical Center. They tested his blood and sure enough, they found out he had dengue.

That same night, my other brother rushed me to the hospital too so I could get a blood test. My *Kuya* JV was in the emergency room with dextrose already. The doctors said I had a mild case of dengue. The next day, *Yaya* Anna was brought to a hospital. She too had a bad case of dengue. They thought she would die because there was water in her lungs because of dengue.

After that we prayed and prayed. God granted our prayers and we all got well. We're all soooo happy!

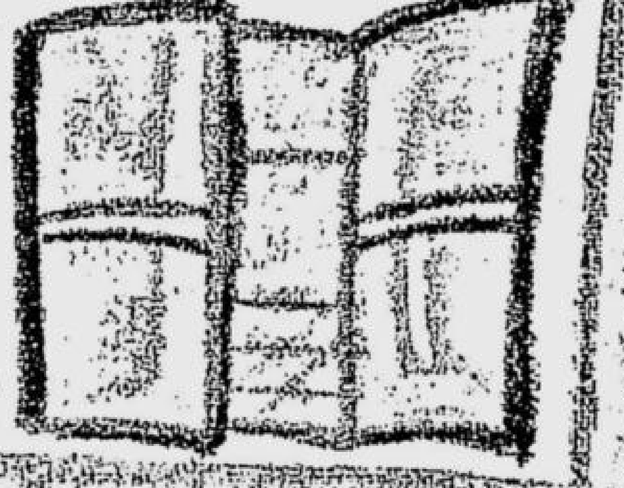
God is so good! So my advice is to fumigate your houses, put insect repellant, and take out any still water in your house that includes drums, flower vases and any small fountains. Please always follow this advice because dengue fever is no joke.

And please pray for all the sick because of this disease. Also dengue fever is common during the rainy season. Go to your doctor when your high fever doesn't go away after two to four days. I hope I gave you some good tips! Health is wealth!

Sound Familiar?
Write down your thoughts now and send them to JI. Who knows, you might just get published!

Straight from JI Readers

You can now reach us via e-mail! Our address is **jl@inquirer.com.ph** Don't forget to include your complete name, age, snail mail address and your phone number. Hope to hear from you soon!



How Kids Can Help

I REALLY think Filipino kids all over the world can make a difference, especially if we all pray to God. There are people all over the world who need our help. For example, those who have lost their family and friends in calamities like landslides and earthquakes. Let's all pray for them.—**ALYNN REYES**, John XXIII Elementary-Junior High School, Alberta, Canada

Cool Potter Review

DEAR Editor,

Hey my name is Hyacinth. Good luck pronouncing it. Ha-ha-ha! I just read Louella Yu's review (JI, Nov. 24, 2001) of the movie "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone." I loved it! I thought she gave a very simple, honest and realistic review of the film. Not like those film critics in Hollywood where they over-analyze almost everything.—**HYACINTH SERMONIA**, 16, Windremere Secondary School, Vancouver, Canada

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The Life and T
The Carbon A

FOR or By KIDS

"It was definitely horrible living in Moohaha the cow, but I eventually got used to it and accepted the cow's system as my new home"

STORY BY KIM SISON
ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

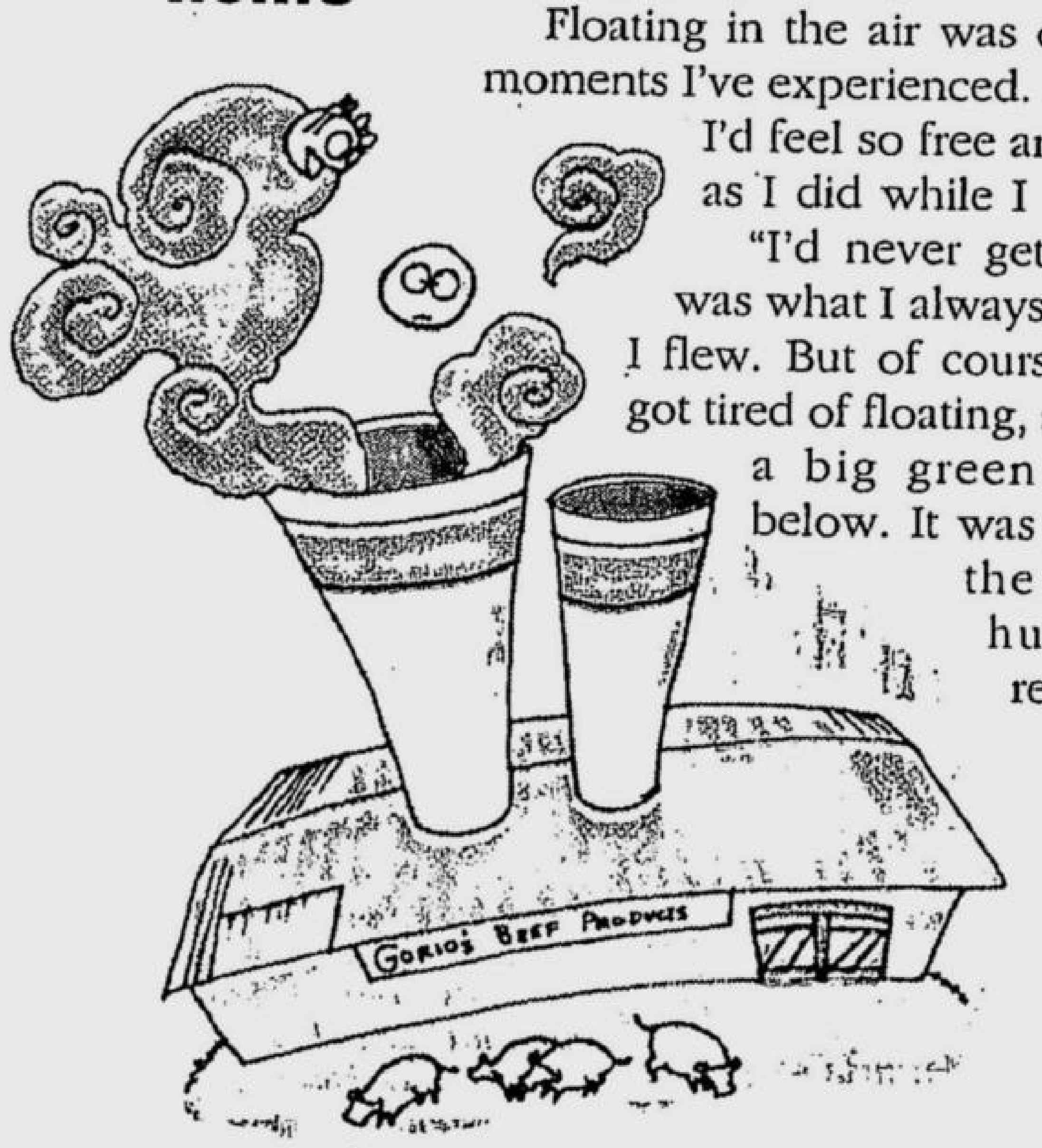
BEING A CARBON ATOM is quite a life to live. You meet a lot of new different chemicals, get to see different things, live in different types of matter. Each organism in this world require being born, living a little, and then they eventually die. Not me though. I'm destined to stay around for a very, very, very long time.

I can't recall how I was born either. I just plain exist here on earth. But before I tell you about my lively, yet typical adventure let me introduce myself! May name is Coby Carbon, and I'm just a regular carbon atom, roaming around earth—with each day a new adventure.

AS I'VE SAID before, I don't recall being born at all. My earliest memory is of being spouted out into the air from a huge, bad-smelling chimney. It was a factory, said my big sister, Carla Carbon. She was with me that time. That was also the last time I saw her, for the wind blew me away to a different direction where the sky was amazingly blue instead of the ugly gray smoke that I woke up to. This was when I was introduced to the unusual world of a natural ecosystem.

Floating in the air was one of the best moments I've experienced. I never thought I'd feel so free and independent as I did while I was flying.

"I'd never get tired of this!" was what I always said whenever I flew. But of course, I eventually got tired of floating, and settled into a big green solid matter below. It was fun to bask in the sun on that huge green refuge that is.



At first I was scared, suddenly getting sucked in the huge green matter like that. But the elderly carbon atoms I met helped me laugh it off and explained to me that I was simply needed by my own green bed, which they called a leaf of a plant.

It took me a couple of runs through the cycle to understand that, but I can really explain it well now. You see, plants use us in order to go through the process of photosynthesis. It's basically a process that helps them grow and create oxygen, using sunlight, water and carbon atoms like us. I learned to accept the leaf as my new home, my home sweet home.

THEN IT happened again. One day, while I was taking a break from work, I felt a huge earthquake smashing through my home! Panicking, I rushed through my carbon friends for help.

But they simply laughed and said, "Good ol' Moohaha is having a meal that's all."

"Good ol' Moohaha?" I wondered. "Who is that?"

Well it turns out Moohaha is a large cow, whose diet included the leaf I lived in. It was hard to adjust in this environment. It was definitely horrible living in Moohaha the cow, but I eventually got used to it and accepted the cow's system as my new home.

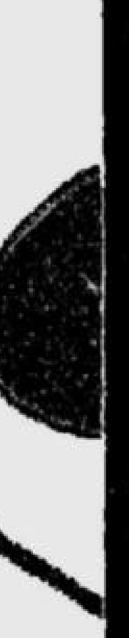
Then the unthinkable happened. "Ah! What's going on! I hear crying!" I screamed. The next thing I knew, I was sealed in a cold styrofoam container with the remains of poor Moohaha. It was really horrible to experience the gruesome killing of the poor cow, but I guess it was just part of the food chain.

I sat in the cold styrofoam container for days, until a middle-aged woman picked up my home and bought it. The sound of firecrackers excited me later that night. What new adventure am I up for next

"OW! Hot! Hot! Hot!" I screamed frantically. It turned out that the firecracker sounds I heard was the boiling oil cooking in a frying pan. I had to suffer through 20 minutes of absolute heat. It was a rather miserable part of my life. Sadly I was unlucky enough not to be evaporated into the air like my other friends.

The next thing I knew, I was sitting and staring up at a huge watery cave, impaled on a silver utensil. It was one of the most unusual experiences I have had, being eaten by a human. First I battled with the hard scary white walls of his teeth, and then I was washed down into his insides. It was even more miserable inside him than Moohaha. His insides were so dark and gloomy. I simply followed my friends into a larger cave inside his body, where there were constant earthquakes every second. There we waited to be extracted again.

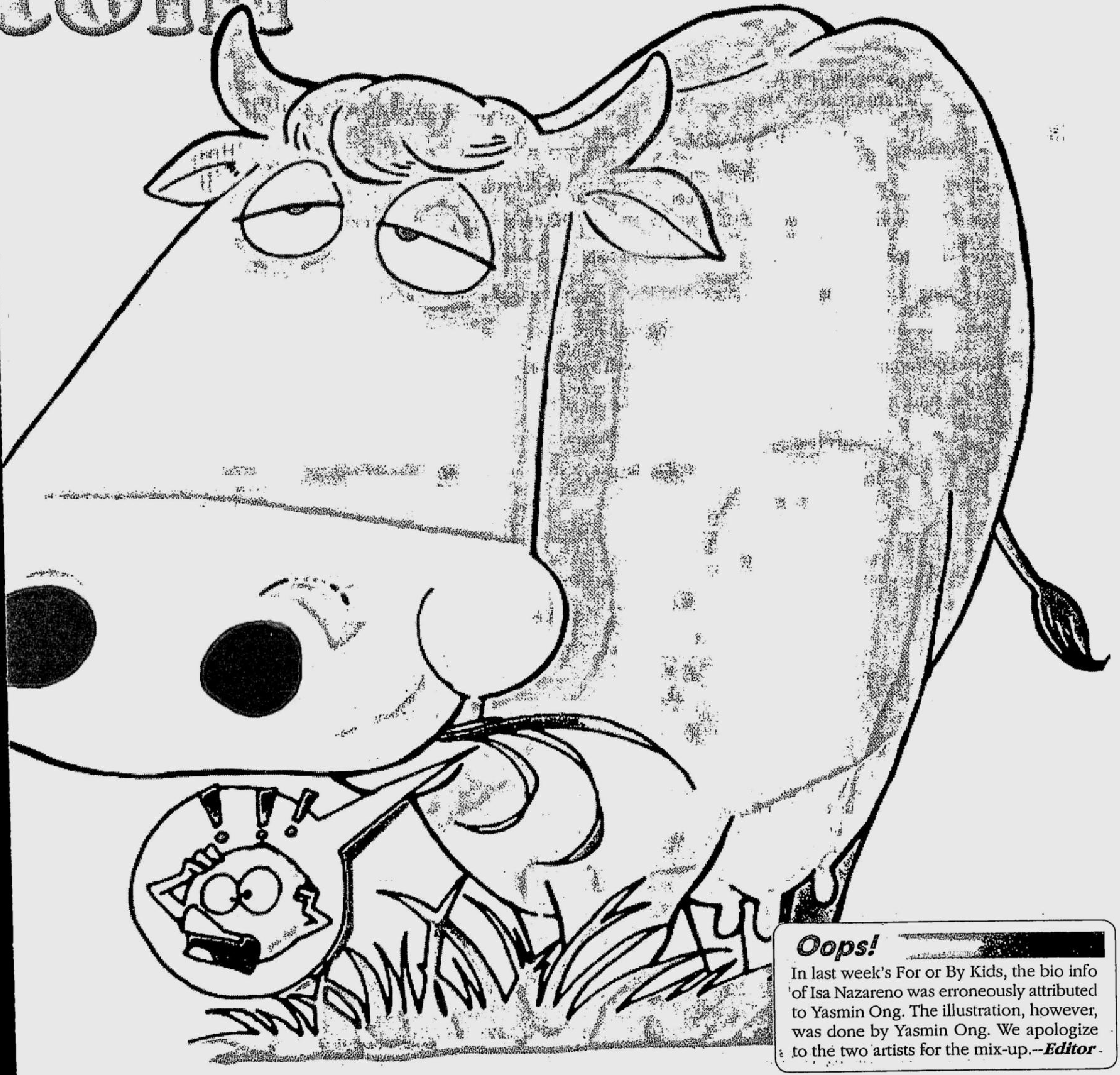
It didn't take long for us to be extracted. The man simply breathed me out one day, and I found myself in the air again—hot smoggy air. I looked at my surroundings and sighed. I'm back in the factory again, waiting to be spouted out by the huge chimneys and sent toward the nice peaceful surroundings of the natural ecosystem.



I'VE HAD MANY different adventures being a carbon atom following a carbon cycle. However, the sequence is always the same: I float into the air, get sucked into the grass, which gets eaten by the consumer who either gets eaten by another or breathes me out. It's a little complicated I know, but hey, it's life. I can't ask for much better adventure than that of a carbon atom, where every day is a new story to be told.

***Kim**, 16, paints, plays the guitar and studies computer animation. She lives in Mississauga City, Ontario, Canada.*

’imes of Coby, tom



Oops!

In last week’s For or By Kids, the bio info of Isa Nazareno was erroneously attributed to Yasmin Ong. The illustration, however, was done by Yasmin Ong. We apologize to the two artists for the mix-up.—***Editor***

The Serious Singer

She's 10. She wants to sing. So does her baby sister

IT'S only been a year since Clarence Vina Francesca Bringera, or Chesca, decided she wanted to sing. But since then, she's sung in three gigs and is now enrolled in voice lessons.

"The first time I was going to sing in public, I was so nervous because there were so many people watching," Chesca said.

"But my mother told me not to be afraid because I can do it," she continued. "And that she will just be there beside me."

It was a good thing her mom gave her some encouraging words because that did the trick. Chesca was able to perform more confidently.

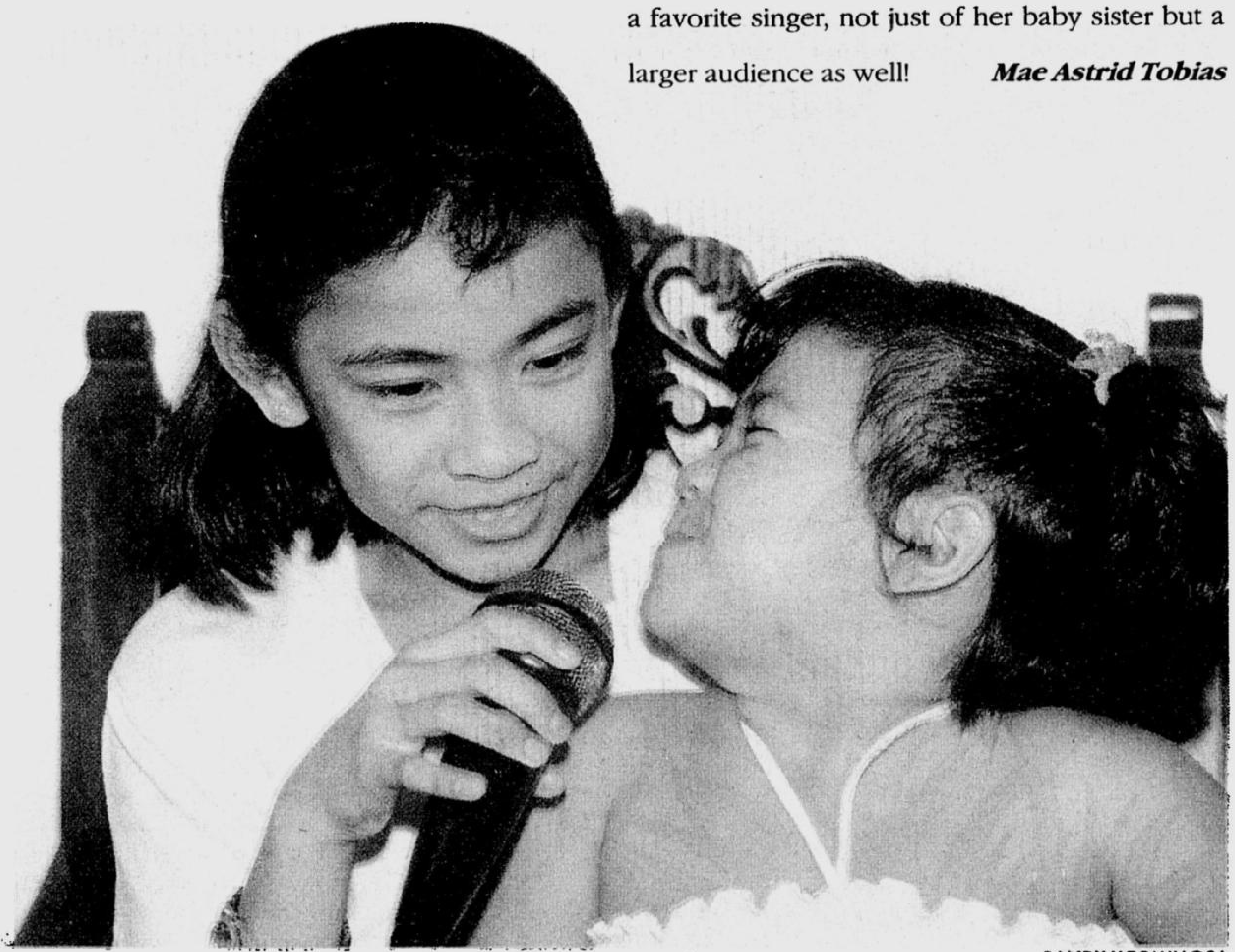
To date, she has sung in three concerts at the Mr. Melody sing-along place in Quezon City and at the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

And she won't stop until she gets better and better. "I want to improve the quality of my voice," she told JI. So, this Grade 4 student from Miriam College Grade School practices regularly at home so she can prepare for her voice lessons.

It's obvious she enjoys her practices. Now, her 3-year-old sister Chelsea won't leave her alone. She keeps grabbing at the microphone to sing along with her *ate*.

Oh well, at least Chesca has a regular, loyal listener. Looks like *ate* is on her way to becoming a favorite singer, not just of her baby sister but a larger audience as well!

Mae Astrid Tobias



RANDY HORMILLOSA

DUET. Chesca is joined by Chelsea during practice at home.

'Rrific kids are smart
'Rrific kids are fun
Some aren't in the honors list
But get their homework done

Somehow the world's
a better place
I know this much is true
Hey 'Rrific kid!
We know you're there
We love you 'cause you're you!

If you think you're `Rriffic' or know someone who is, fill out the nomination form below and send it to:

Junior Inquirer
'KIDS'R'RRIFIC' Page
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Chosen nominees will be featured on this page and will get a free Junior Inquirer T-shirt!

Kids'r'rrific
nomination form

I nominate: ____________________

Age: ________

I think she's/he's 'Rrific because:
(Here's a tip! Write a detailed description of a good deed, project or accomplishment by your nominee.)

____

She/he lives at

____

and studies at

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Her/his contact number is:

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Sender's Name:

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____

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Science from 'The Great Dolphin'

Learning Science is amazing and fantastic with Ateneo Grade School's Mr. Delfin Bautista

BY MARGAUX ORTIZ

SCIENCE is one of the most interesting subjects we have at school. But admit it, the lessons can really get boring at times. This happens when we meet unfamiliar words and concepts. Mr. Delfin Bautista, the lively science teacher from Ateneo Grade School, knows all about this. So, he cooks up fantastic ways to teach science.

"Science always has to be concrete for the children to learn quickly," says 55-year-old Mr. Bautista. He teaches life science, biology, physical and earth science to Grade 3 students. "I make it a point to show them, not just make them sit down and listen to me talk."

Mr. Bautista also tells his students stories connected to the lesson. "I try to insert a little drama here and there to enliven the otherwise boring discussion," he laughs. "For example, I tell them the story of how the mahogany trees' seeds look like helicopters, with propellers and all," says Bautista.

Grade School Fun

He adds, "I explain to the children that the seeds were made this way so they could have a better chance of survival." With the stories he tells his students, they get to reflect about the things around them and learn to appreciate their surroundings more.

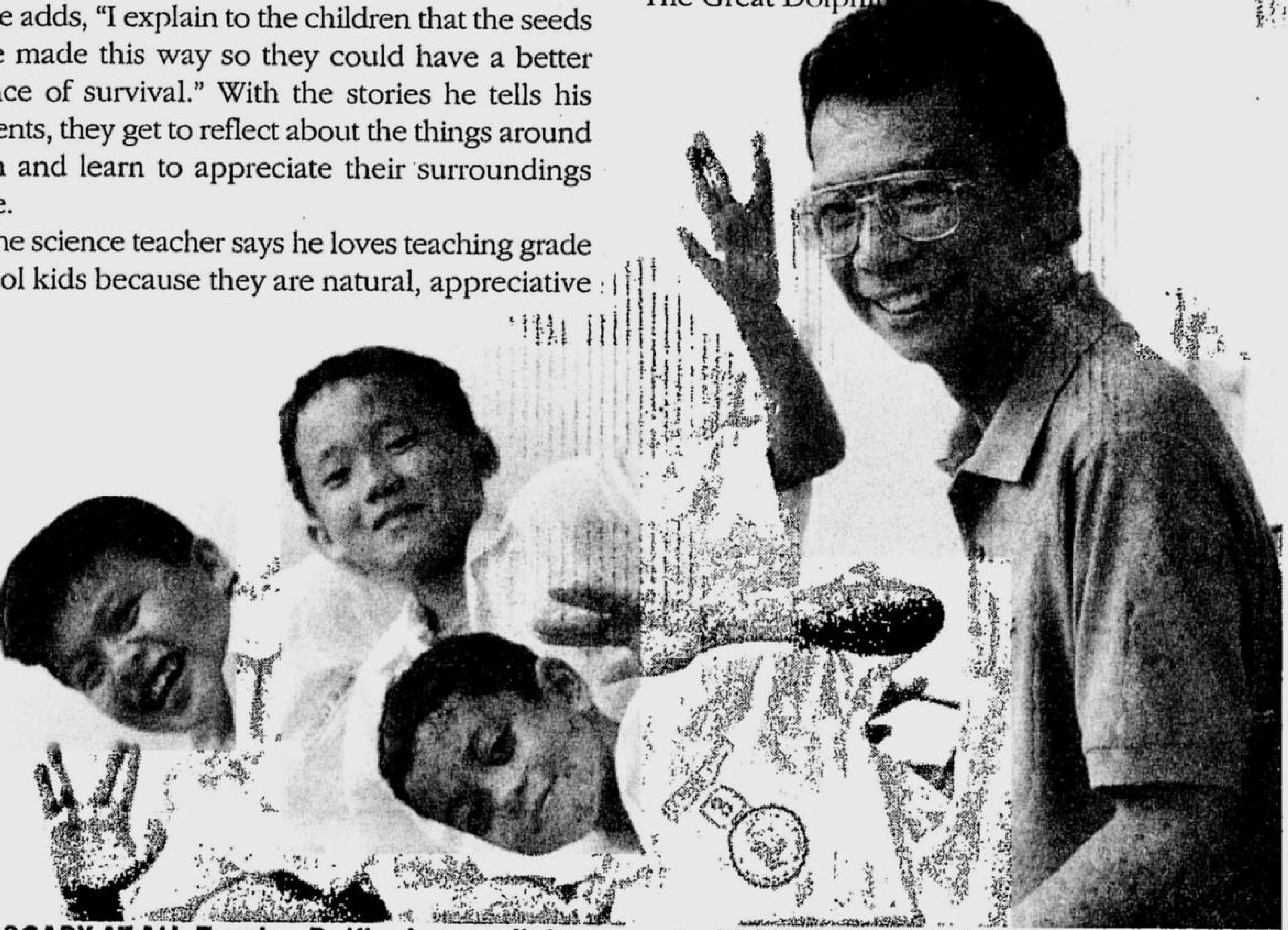
The science teacher says he loves teaching grade school kids because they are natural, appreciative and eager to learn. "And I really remember enjoying my grade school days very much," he smiles, his eyes twinkling. "I want these children to enjoy grade school as much as I did by making them feel that I am also their friend, ready to share the fun they have every step of the way."

The Dolphin

Mr. Bautista relates that he created a story about his name (Delfin) and that he really came from the sea. His students call him "The Great Dolphin" and flash Mr. Bautista their special v-shaped hand sign whenever they see him. "Children really enjoy themselves in my class because we treat each other as comrades," he grins.

Because he has been teaching for 34 years, he plans to retire five years from now. "I have taught generations of grade school students for many years," says Mr. Bautista. "I just wish that the children will have a fantastic time in grade school even after I have retired from teaching," he smiles.

Until that time, grade three students will still have a sure blast learning to be young scientists with "The Great Dolphin"



NOT SCARY AT ALL. Teacher Delfin shares a light moment with his students at the Ateneo campus.

RANDY HORMILLOSA

Do you know a grown-up who

- is fun to be with
- has an exciting job
- keeps an amazing hobby
- is all of the above???

If you know a grown-up whom all kids will love, give him or her the stamp:

A.K.A. COOL

*Just fill out the nomination form below and tell us why your fave grown-up is the absolute coolest. If your nominee is chosen, **YOU'LL** get a free JI T-shirt! Now that's really cool.*

A.K.A. COOL
is an 'adult known as cool'
They're the folks
in our own family
Or the people
we meet in school.

I nominate ____________________.
He/She is _____ years old and is
my ____________________.
Here are five super solid
reasons why I think you should
write about him/her:
1)____________________;
2)____________________;
3)____________________;
4)____________________;
and
5)____________________.

My nominee lives at ____________
____________________.
Give him/her a call at __________
______________ or send him/
her an e-mail
at ______________.
By the way, I'm ______________
____________________.
I'm ______ years old.
My address is
____________________.
You may call me at
____________________.

¿ThinkathoN?
By Bong Barrameda

CHRISTMAS Carols

THIS QUIZ should be a cool breeze if you're (or was) a caroler, or just a plain lover of Christmas tunes. In each number, earn a point if you can correctly fill in the two missing lyrics, and then give yourself an extra point if you can name the title of the carol as well. Perfect merry score is 30.

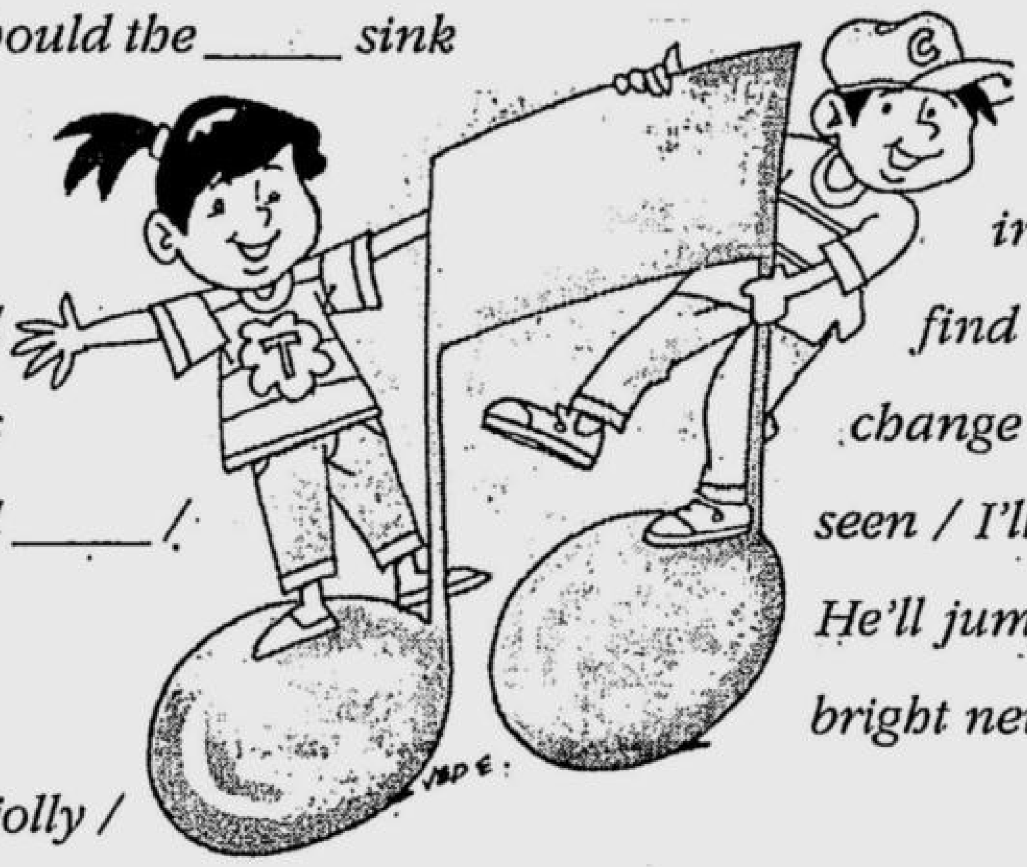
1. *Tayo'y' mangagsi-await / Habang ang _____ tahimik / Ang araw ay sumapit / Ng sanggol na _____ ng langit*

2. *She thought I was _____ up / In my bedroom fast asleep / Then I saw Mommy tickle Santa Claus / _____ his beard so snowy white*

3. *Here we are as in olden days / Happy golden days of _____ / Faithful friends who are dear to us / _____ near to us once more*

4. *Yuletide carols / Being sung by a choir / And folks dressed up like _____ /* Everybody knows / A turkey and some _____ / Help make the season bright

5. *Oh how welcome thy voice / Making my heart in his sorrow _____ / Then when the night is upon us / Why should the _____ sink away*



6. *The horse was lean and lank / _____ seemed his lot / He got into a drifted _____ / And we, we got upshot*

7. *'Tis the season to be jolly / Fa la la la la, la la la la / Don we now our gay _____ / Fa la la la la, la la la la / _____ the ancient Yuletide carol / Fa la la la la, la la la la*

8. *Snowin' and blowin' up _____ of fun / Now the jingle hop has begun / Jingle bell, jingle bell, jingle bell _____ / Jingle bells chime in jingle bell time / Dancin' and prancin' in the jingle bell square*

9. *Twelve drummers drumming gaily / Eleven pipers piping gaily / Ten _____ a-leaping gaily / Nine ladies dancing gaily / Eight _____ a-milking gaily*

10. *They looked up and saw a star / Shining in the _____ / Beyond them far / and to _____ it gave great light / And so it continued both day and night*

11. *But everyday's a _____ / When I'm near you / The lights on my tree / I wish you could see / I wish it every day / Logs on the fire fill me with _____.*

12. *Sing choirs of angels / Sing in _____ / O sing, all ye _____ of heavenly above / Glory to God, all glory in the highest*

13. *I'll put some _____ in your hair / And you'll find there's a strange new change / That you have never seen / I'll bring my boy a toy / He'll jump with joy / To see his bright new _____.*

14. *The Saviour reigns / Let men their _____ employ / While fields and floods / Rocks, _____, and plains / Repeat the sounding joy / Repeat the sounding joy*

15. *Bakit magtatampo't / Nilisan ako / Kung mawawala ka / Sa piling ko sinta / Paano ang Pasko / _____ mo? Sayang sinta ang sinumpaan / Nais mo bang kalimutang ganap / Ang ating suyuan at _____.*

Answers

1. *mundo'y / dulot* ("Ang Pasko Ay Sumapit")
2. *tucked / Underneath* ("I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus")
3. *yore / Gather* ("Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas")
4. *Eskimos / mistletoe* ("The Christmas Song" or "Chestnuts Roasting On An Open Fire")
5. *rejoice / heart* ("Whispering Hope")
6. *Misfortune / bank* ("Jingle Bells")
7. *apparel / Troll* ("Deck The Halls")
8. *bushels / rock* ("Jingle Bell Rock")
9. *lords / maids* ("The Twelve Days Of Christmas")
10. *east / Earth* ("The First Noel")
11. *holiday / desire* ("Merry Christmas, Darling")
12. *exultation / citizens* ("O Come, All Ye Faithful" or "Adeste Fideles")
13. *tinsel / queen* ("My Little Christmas Tree")
14. *songs / hills* ("Joy To The World")
15. *Inulila / galak* ("Pasko Na Sinta Ko")

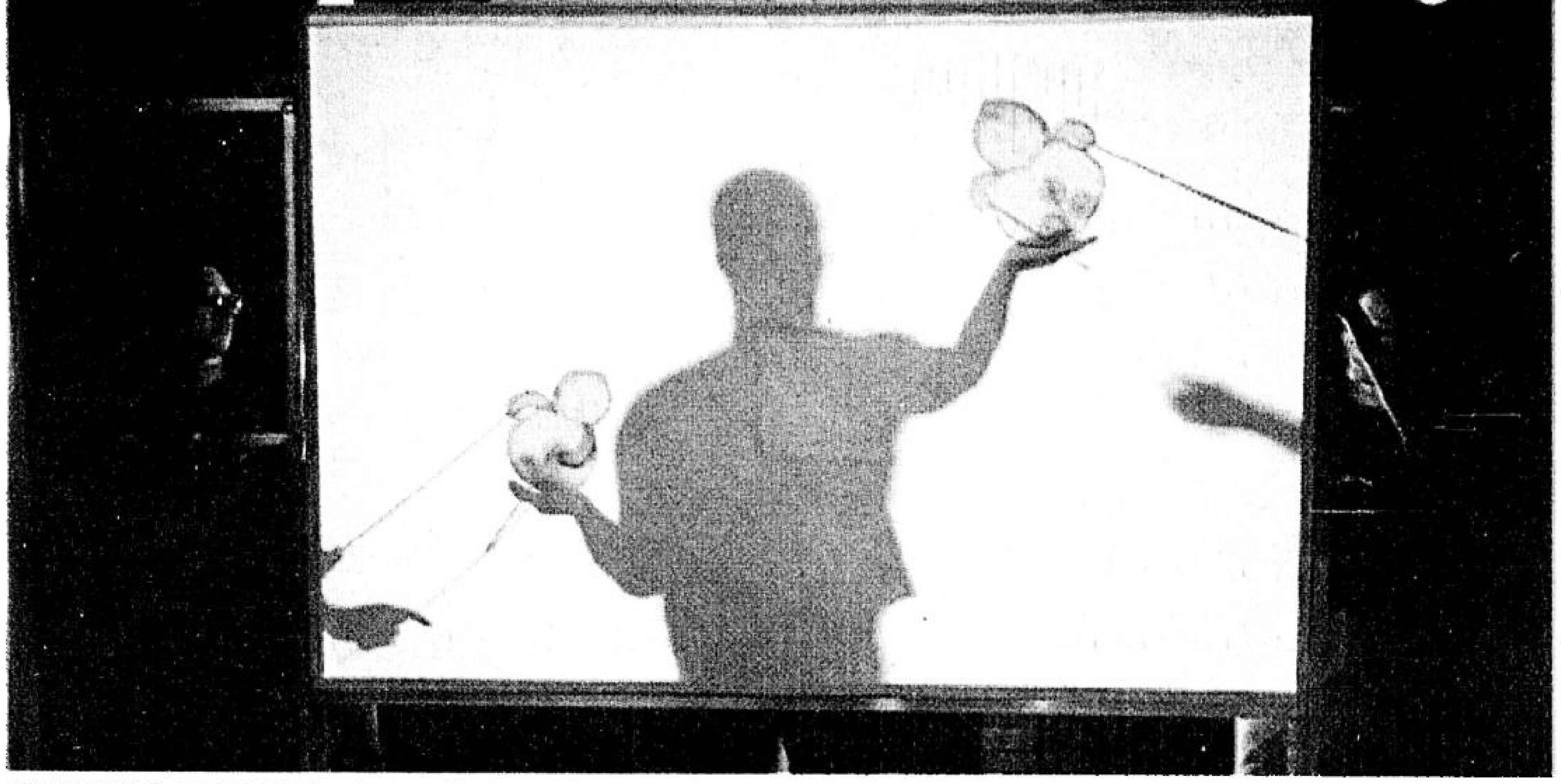
Ratings

superbrain!
27 - 30

excellent!
21 - 26

good!
15 - 20

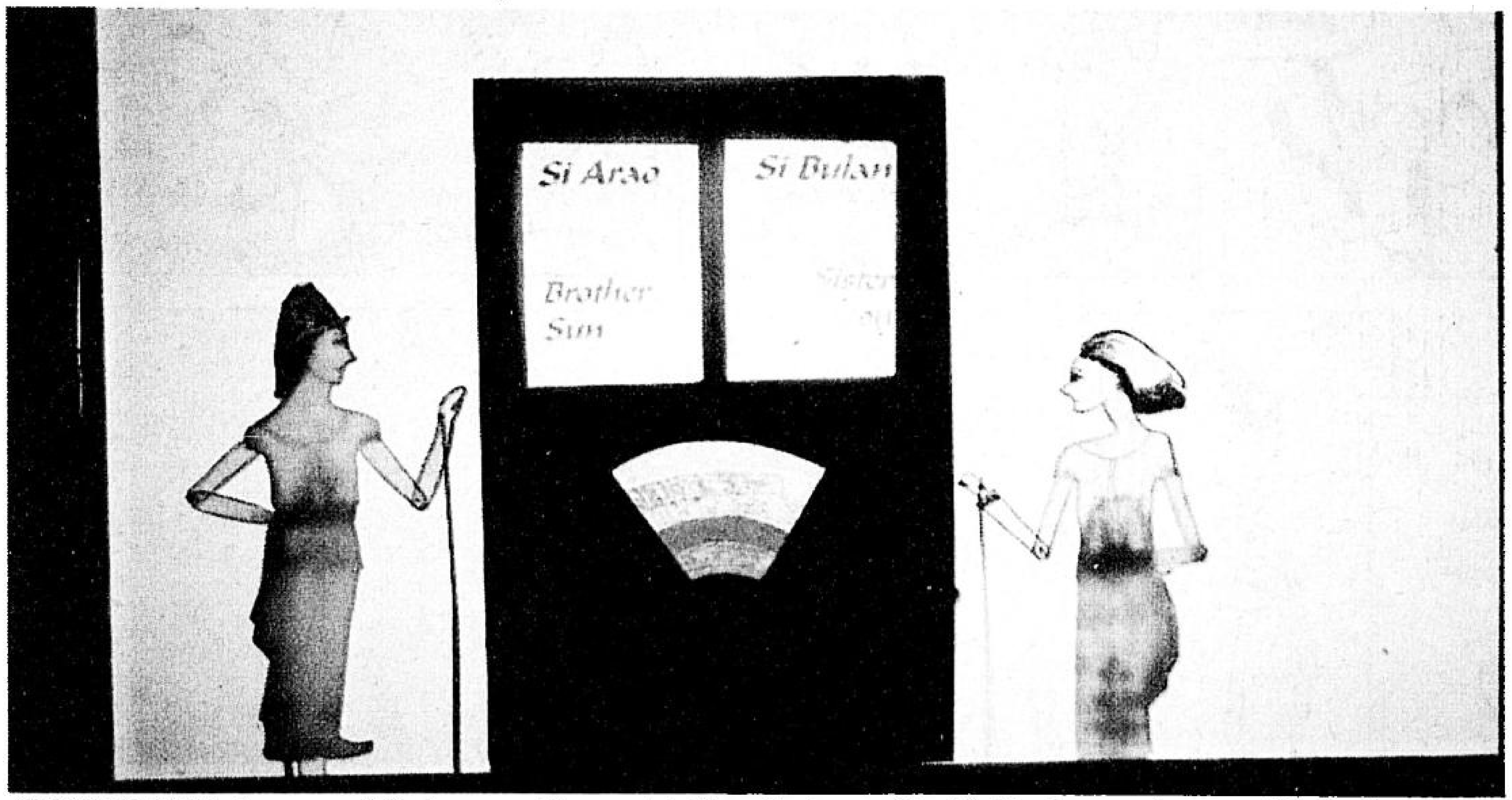
Storytellers and Colored Shadows



BATHALA CREATES. Actor Luis Mijares plays Bathala in these scene where the god creates two clouds which would later act as his assistants.

Photos by MIKE ALQUINTO

THE CAST. First row (from left): Erli Katrina Liwag; playwright and Teatrong Mulat founder Amelia Lapeña-Bonifacio; Amihan Bonifacio-Ramolete; Aina Ramolete. Second row (from left): Diane Mendez; Ronald dela Cruz; Luis Mijares, Joeliza Pandalan; Rochelle Soriaga.



GALIT-GALIT. Arao and Bulan really couldn't get along. So, Bathala made sure that when one rises in the sky, the other one sets.

(from page1)

"The beautiful thing about the story is it gave me a chance to create a series of animals that would show how God created them," said Bonifacio, who also wrote the play. "It turned out beautifully."

Arao and Bulan in the Philippines

Teatrong Mulat, one of the first groups to dedicate itself to shadow puppet plays in the Philippines, first performed "Si Arao at Si Bulan" last Oct. 24 at an international puppet festival in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Just yesterday and on Dec. 12, Filipino audiences finally got to see their latest work at the Dalisay Aldaba Recital Hall in the University of the Philippines campus in Quezon City.

Kids and adults in Cebu and the Visayas will also get a chance to watch this play on February when Teatrong Mulat goes on tour.

"We wanted to show that there is *wayang* in the Philippines," Bonifacio added. "Otherwise, without this show; (we are excluded from) the culture of the (Asian) region because the *wayang* is a very important art form in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore."

Wayang What?

Wayang is the Bahasa word for puppet and *kulit* is for shadow. Bonifacio just means Teatrong Mulat honors the age old tradition of shadow puppetry in Asia. Lots of *wayang kulit* festival are held all over the region and Teatrong Mulat has represented our country in most of these.

Bonifacio explained that all over Asia, different materials are used in making a *wayang kulit*. In China, puppeteers use goatskin, which is very fine and thin. In Egypt, they make shadow puppets out of elephant skin, which is very thick. There are some countries that use cow skin.

Bonifacio is pretty happy at how their latest batch of puppets turned out.

"Never in the history of *wayang* could you see birds and butterflies," she beamed. In future performances, she intends to ask the audience's participation in identifying the animals as they flit by the lighted screen.

The playwright, who is also the grandmother of Aina—the child who bangs the gong at the beginning of the play—hopes to experiment some more using shadow puppetry in bringing to life other stories we have grown to love.

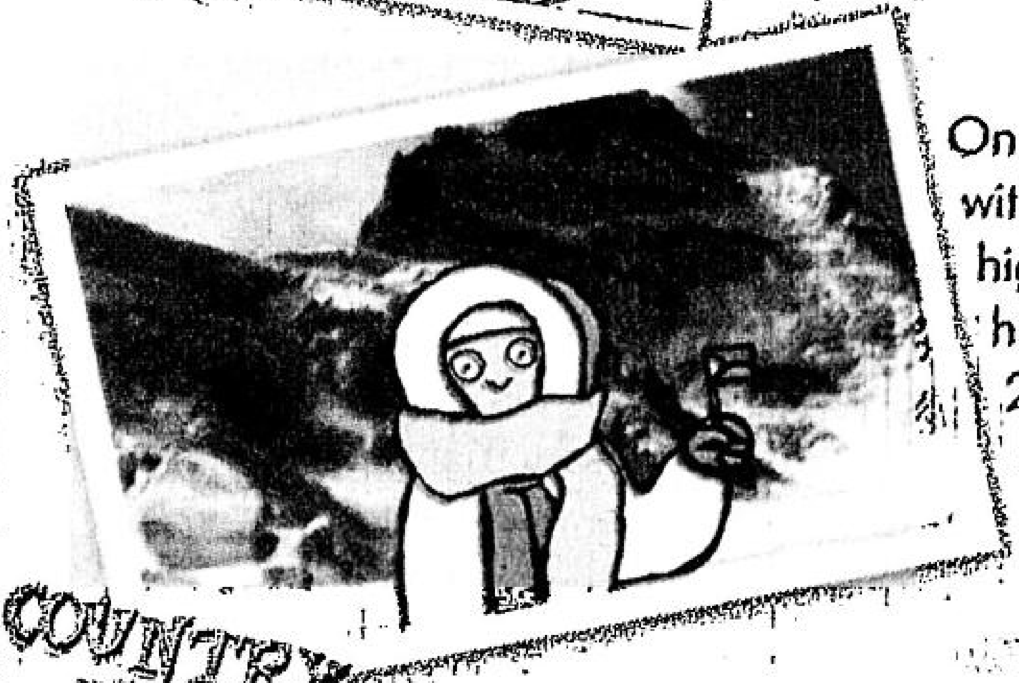
"I think we have some very good legends and folktales that are crying to be made into shadow plays," she says with a smile. "And as long as I can draw a straight line, I will make the puppets."

Mae Astrid Tobias

THE LUNCH BOX

by Katrina B. Villa

NOY GOES ROUND THE WORLD



On this country's border with China lies 8 of the world's highest mountain peaks. The highest is Mount Everest, which is 29,028 feet tall! Here I am, standing proud (and practically frozen) on an icy peak!

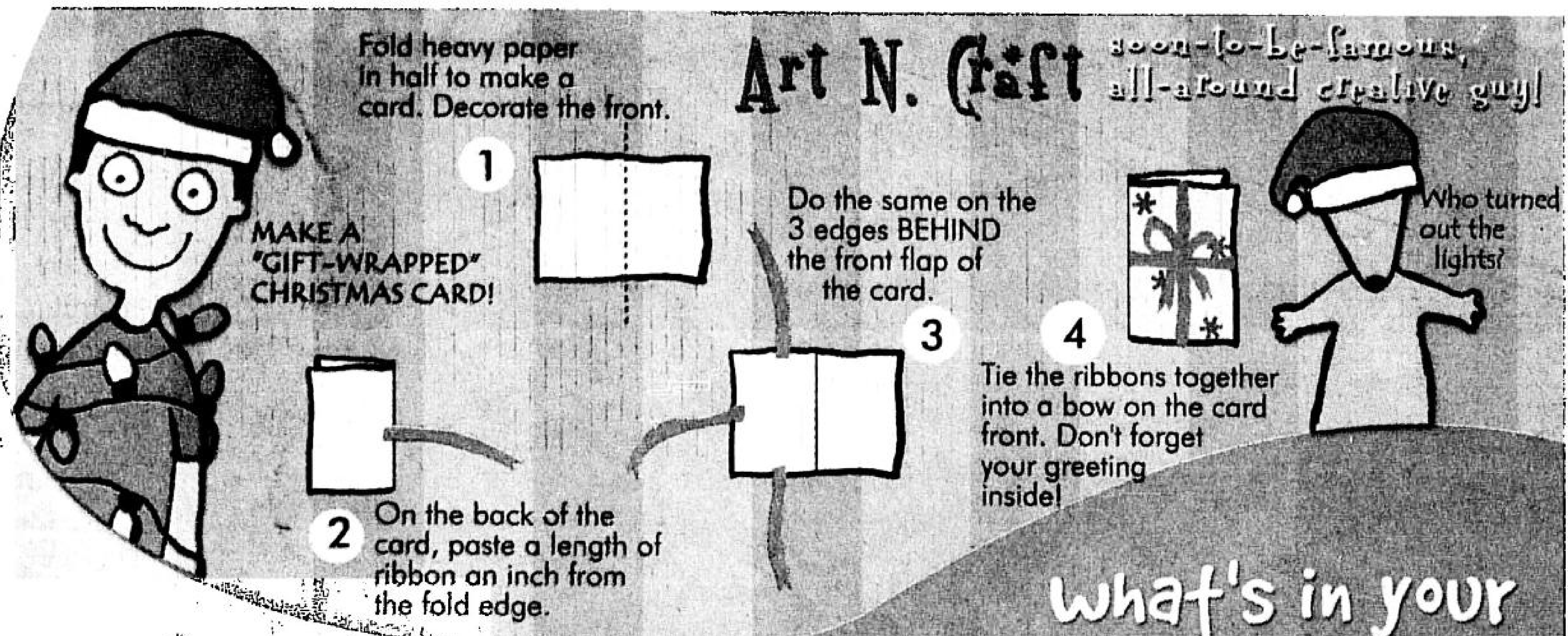
COUNTRY NO. 5

WHAT COUNTRY IS NOY IN?

Write down all 5 countries he visits, then send your complete list to The Lunch Box, c/o 31. List ALL 5 COUNTRIES CORRECTLY and WIN A PRIZE!

Art N. Craft

soon-to-be-famous, all-around creative guy!



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Who turned out the lights?

MAKE A "GIFT-WRAPPED" CHRISTMAS CARD!

1. Fold heavy paper in half to make a card. Decorate the front.

2. On the back of the card, paste a length of ribbon an inch from the fold edge.

3. Do the same on the 3 edges BEHIND the front flap of the card.

4. Tie the ribbons together into a bow on the card front. Don't forget your greeting inside!

What's in your Christmas wish list?

Aside from the usual presents, you might want to wish for some other things for yourself and your loved ones this Christmas, like:

Peace
Joy
Love
Christ
Giving
Kindness
Family
Health

K	I	N	D	N	E	S	S
F	E	H	E	A	R	L	F
U	P	E	A	C	E	O	A
T	G	A	L	H	W	V	M
P	I	L	O	R	Z	E	I
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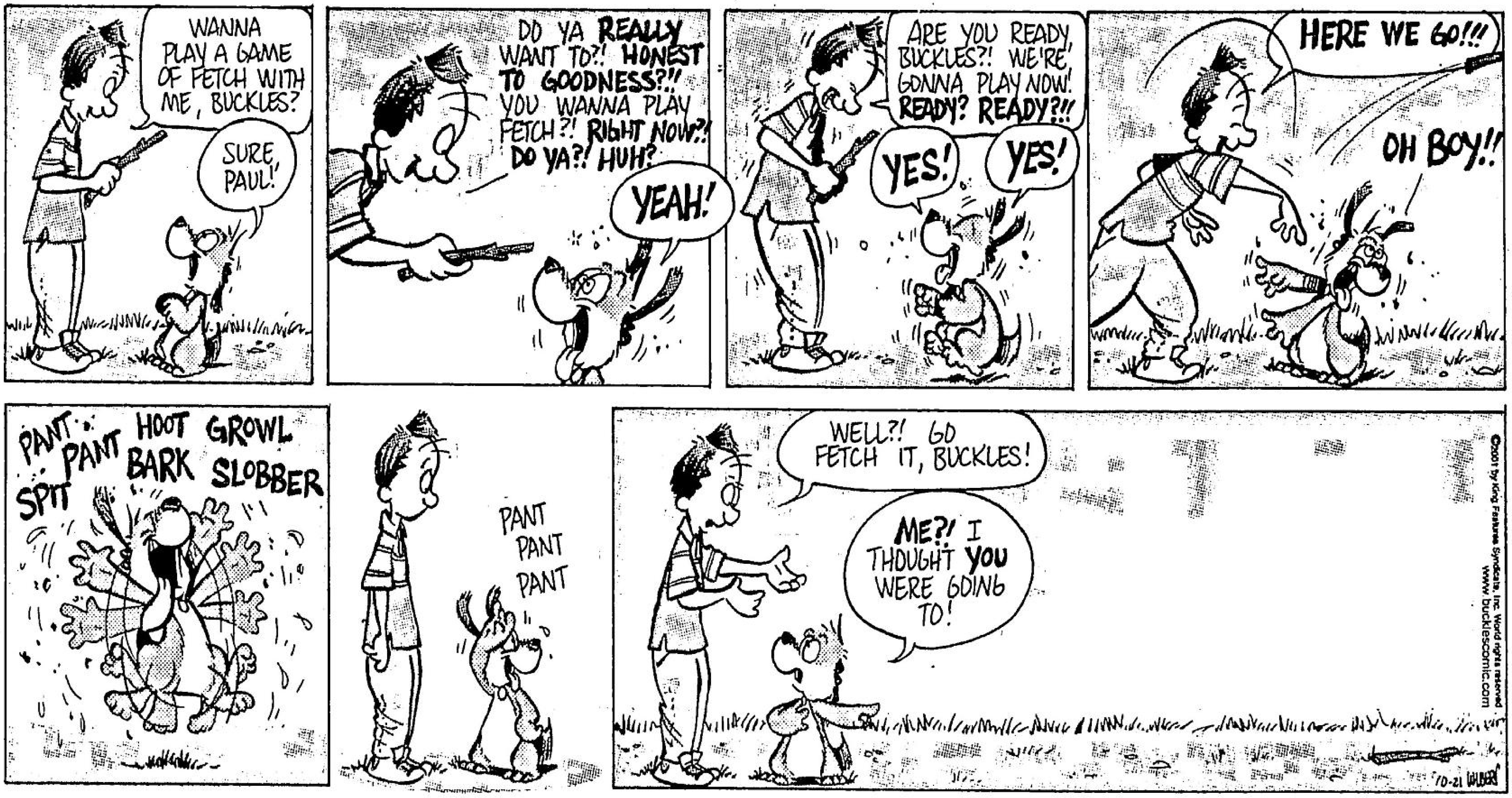
BUCKLES

BY DAVID GILBERT



WANNA PLAY A GAME OF FETCH WITH ME, BUCKLES?
SURE, PAUL!
DO YA REALLY WANT TO?! HONEST TO GOODNESS?!! YOU WANNA PLAY FETCH?! RIGHT NOW?! DO YA?! HUH?
YEAH!
ARE YOU READY, BUCKLES?! WE'RE GONNA PLAY NOW! READY? READY?!!
YES!
YES!
HERE WE GO!!!
OH BOY!!
PANT PANT HOOT GROWL BARK SLOBBER SPIT
PANT PANT PANT
WELL?! GO FETCH IT, BUCKLES!
ME?! I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO!

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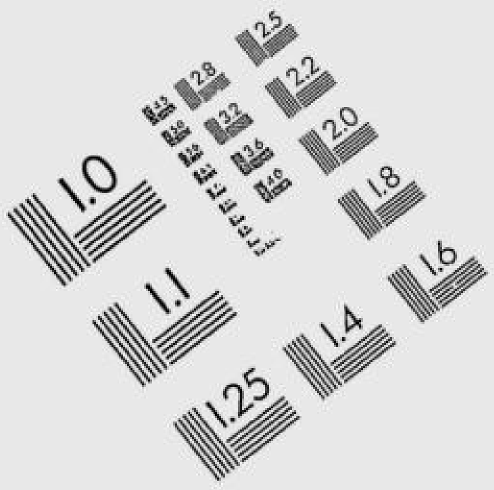
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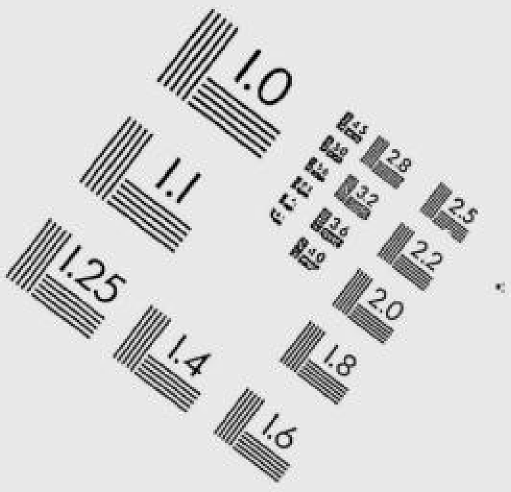
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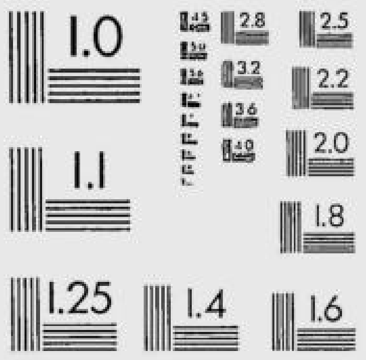
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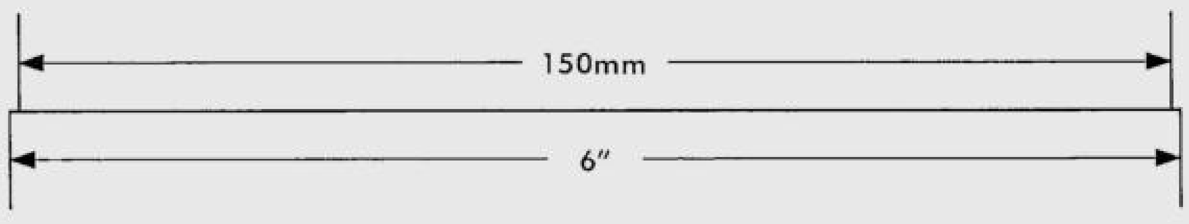

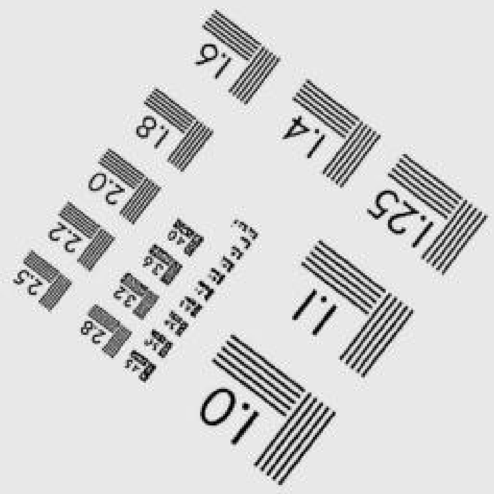
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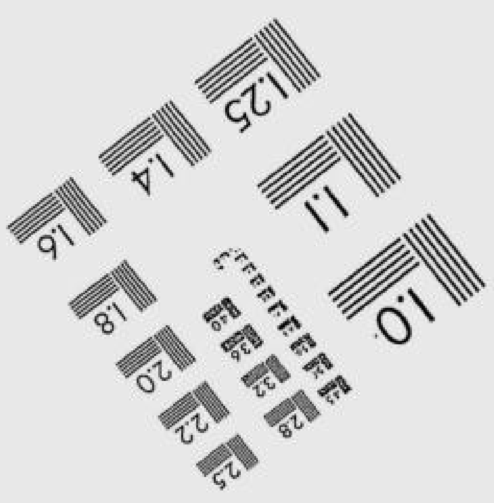
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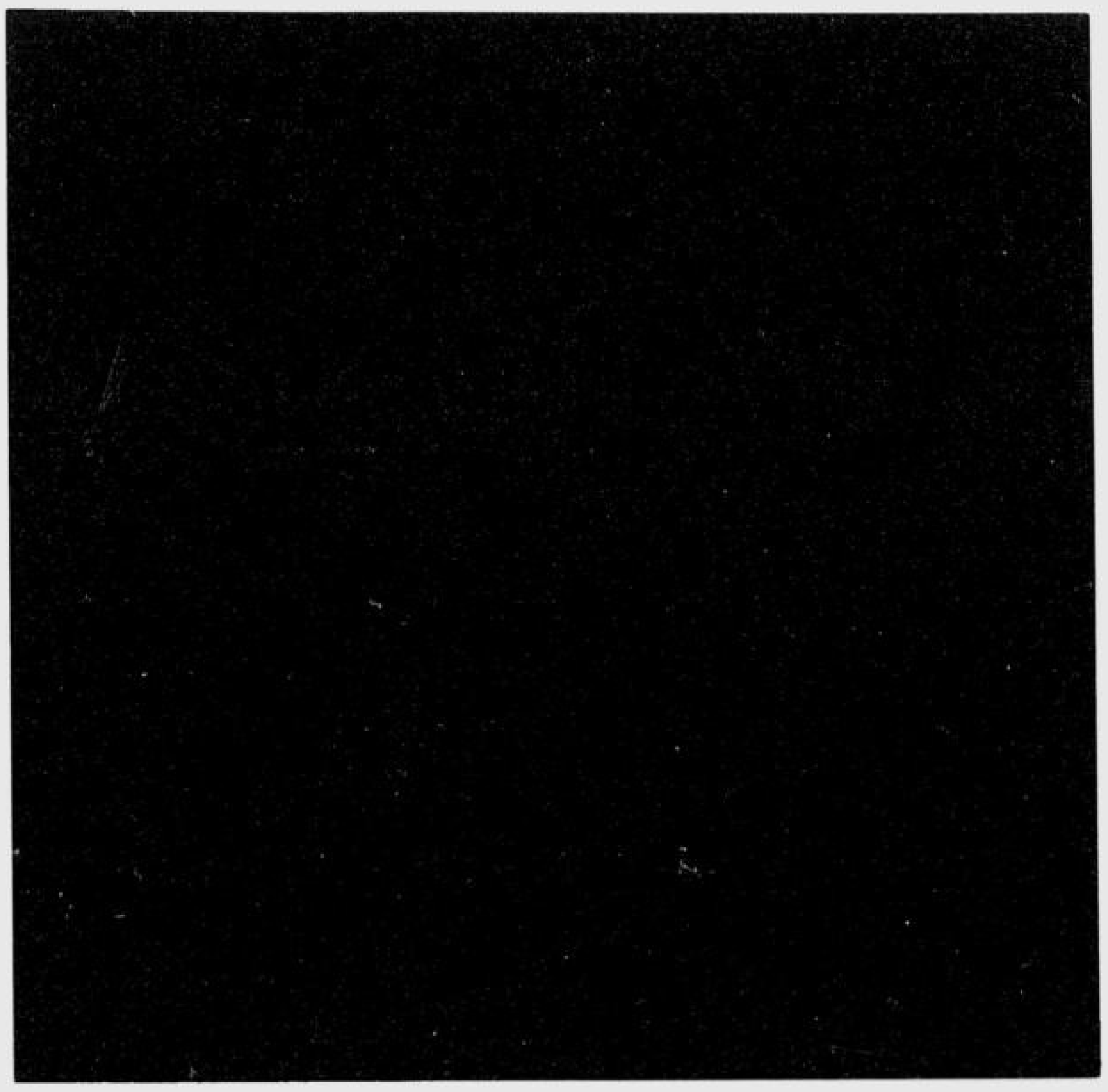

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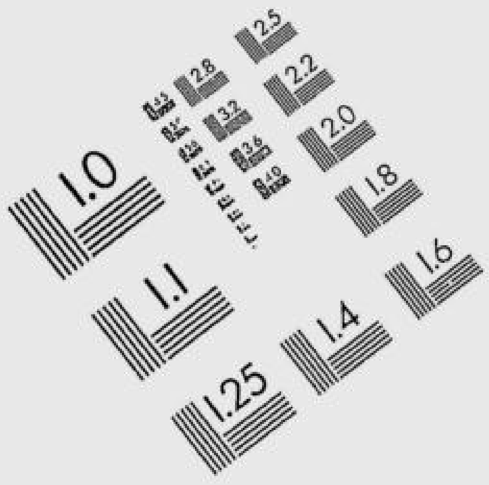
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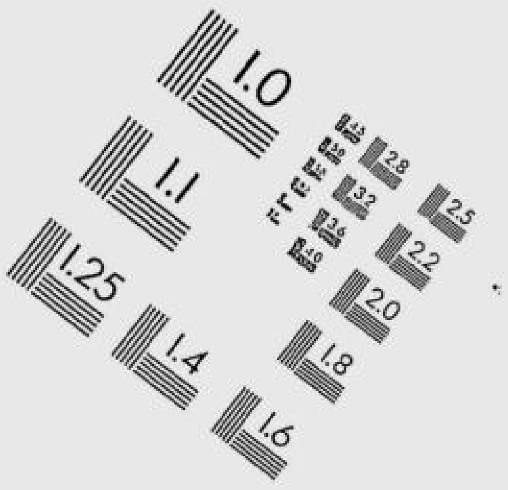
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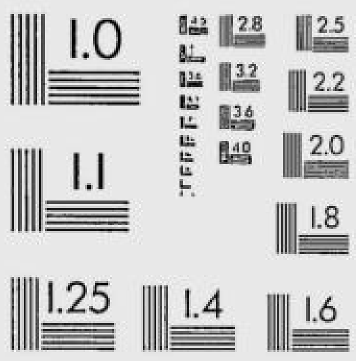
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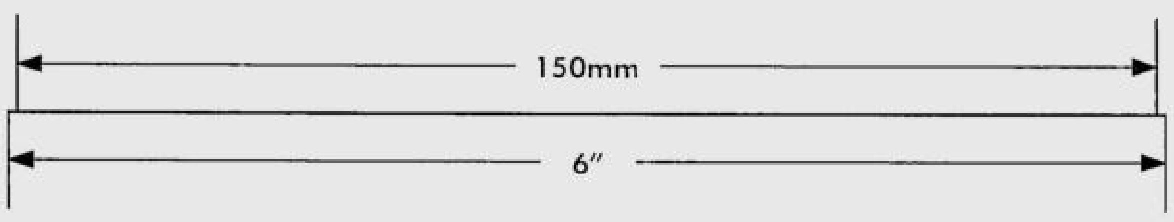

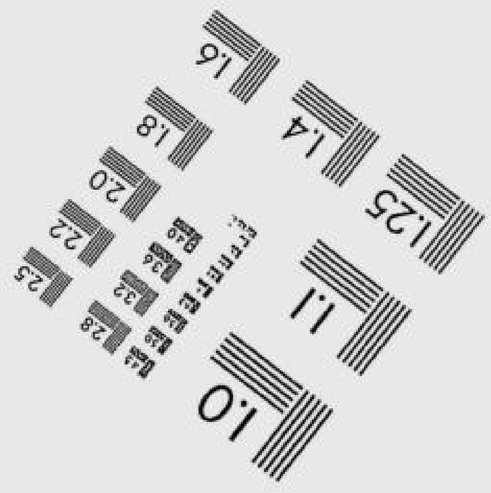
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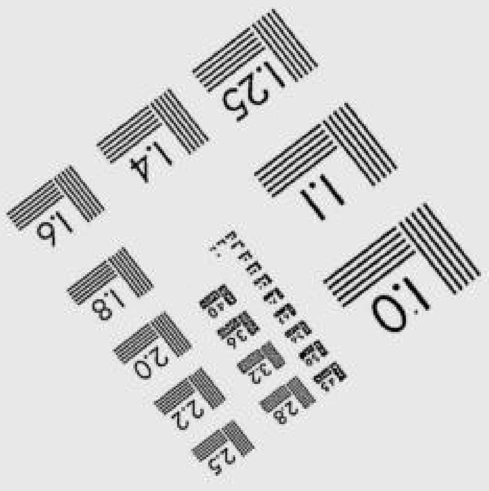
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